

**Bridging the North, February 25–26, 2022**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Partnership Conference between University of Manitoba and University of Iceland**  
**Held in Winnipeg (virtual)**

Michael Benarroch, President, University of Manitoba,  
Jeff Taylor, Dean of Arts, University of Manitoba,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the University of Iceland, it is a great honour to address the 10th Partnership Conference between the University of Manitoba and the University of Iceland. In 2021, the University of Manitoba's Department of Icelandic Language and Literature celebrated its 70th anniversary and we were looking very much forward to attending the Partnership Conference in Winnipeg and gather in the beautiful Elizabeth Dafoe Library's Icelandic Collection. All the more reason to embrace the consolation at hand, and I would like to thank our partner university for hosting the 10<sup>th</sup> Partnership Conference in a virtual format.

In August 2019, the 9th Partnership Conference was held in Reykjavík, highlighting the subject of migration. At the time, we also celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Agreement between the two universities in the company of Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Iceland's Prime Minister, Anne-Tamara Lorre, who at the time served as Canada's Ambassador to Iceland, and Jeff Taylor, Dean of Arts, University of Manitoba. Janis Johnson, former senator and the current Chair of the Icelandic Valuing Presence committee at the University of Manitoba, and Donald K. Johnson, one of North America's leading philanthropists and a major donor to The Stephan G. Stephansson Endowment Fund, University of Iceland, also attended the conference. Richard Sigurdson, University of Manitoba's former Dean of Arts and currently serving as Dean of Arts at the University of Alberta, was a special guest and participated as one of the keynote speakers.

The Agreement between the two universities continuous to allow for an exchange of students and professors, and the series of conferences. The Partnership Conference is the corner stone of the Agreement. It provides the circumstances needed for scholars and students to cultivate the Canada-Iceland connection through an exchange of ideas, and in turn, to enlighten the general public on both sides of the Atlantic on cutting edge research findings from within various fields of academia.

The program of the 10<sup>th</sup> Partnership Conference, Bridging the North, is no exception. It features Ryan Eyford as a keynote speaker. His book *White Settler Reserve: New Iceland and the Colonization of the Canadian West* is ground-breaking research on the colonial reserve system in nineteenth century Canada. Following the keynote, two sessions appear on the findings of The Icelandic Heritage Project, led by Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, Höskuldur Þráinsson and Úlfar Bragason. This is another ground-breaking research, which examines the language and culture of Icelandic heritage enclaves in Canada and the United States. The natural environment of the North, in times of climate change, is addressed in a panel by two of Iceland's leading scholars in the field, and the program also features panels on cutting edge research from both sides of the Atlantic on Institutions and Cultural Connections; Travel, Literature and Geography, and Aesthetics and Representation.

On behalf of the University of Iceland, I would like to thank Emöke Zathmary and David Bernard, former presidents of the University of Manitoba, for their support of our partnership. I would also like to thank President Michael Benarroch for his commitment to the agreement and do hope that we will be able to meet in person in the near future. The role played by the Valuing Icelandic Presence committee at the University of Manitoba in safeguarding the Agreement is no less crucial.

The subject of collaboration has shaped the vision of the University of Iceland throughout its history and we continue to view international collaboration as essential for both our students and faculty. Within the context of our collaborators world-wide, however, our connection with the University of Manitoba stands apart, thanks to the existence of its Department of Icelandic Language and Literature. Our aim is to safeguard and further strengthen our relations through new partnership initiatives, thanks in part to the support of the government of Iceland within the domain of the newly established Stephan G. Stephansson research position at the University of Iceland.

As always, when the Partnership Conference is hosted by the University of Manitoba, we can rely on the Department of Icelandic Language and Literature, and I would specially like to thank Peter John Buchan, Catari Macaulay Gauthier, Dustin Geeraert, Ryan E. Johnson and Katrín Níelsdóttir for their great service. I would also like to thank Dean Taylor and his office, the Valuing Icelandic Presence committee, the Icelandic Collection, and the group of faculty members from various departments who also served on the committee for this conference. On our end, Birna Bjarnadóttir, Faculty of Languages and Culture, Magnús

Diðrik Baldursson, Director of the Office of the Rector, Sumarliði Ísleifsson, Faculty of History and Philosophy, and Þóra Ellen Þórhallsdóttir, Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, served on the University of Iceland's committee. Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson, Faculty of Earth Sciences, was a special consultant in the field of climate change, and I thank them all for their great service.

In closing, while I thank the speakers, facilitators and organizers for their participation, and you, the audience, for being here in a virtual format, I wish you all an enlightening and inspiring conference!