

A Passion for Liberal Education

An English professor and literary scholar, a cultural activist and academic administrator, Dr. Constance Rooke brings a genuine passion for liberal education to her new position as President of The University of Winnipeg.

In a telephone interview from her Associate Vice-President Academic office at the University of Guelph, Dr. Rooke reveals: "My first inducement to come to The University of Winnipeg was its passion for liberal education. It's pervasive in the institution, and there's an obvious dedication to students." She adds that the high level of research involving undergraduates and the lifelong learning focus are other attractive features. "With the Division of Continuing Education and The Collegiate, you've created a picture that shows a wonderful learning continuum."

The new President, who will start by the fall of 1999, says that she delights in the reputation that our univer-



sity enjoys and keeps bumping into enthusiastic University of Winnipeg graduates. "They all speak of their university with such great affection; your alumni have a tremendous loyalty," she observes.

Born in New York City and raised in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia, Dr. Rooke completed her own post-secondary education in the United States. When it became "time to get a job," she joined the wave of American and British professors who entered Canada in the late 1960s. At the University of Victoria, she quickly became a "Canadianist," falling in love with Canadian literature at a time when it was really beginning to flower.

Her academic career blossomed too, as she rose in the ranks to Professor of

English, Director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, and Chair of Women's Studies. In 1988, she moved across the country to the University of Guelph where she assumed the position of Chair of the English Department. For the past four years, she has been the Associate Vice-President Academic.

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The University of Winnipeg Presidential Search and Nominating Committee

Report to the Board of Regents

98/11/30

Recommendation

The Presidential Search and Nominating Committee unanimously recommends:

that Constance Rooke, B.A., M.A., Ph.D., be appointed President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Winnipeg for a five-year term commencing on a date to be arrived at by mutual agreement with the Board Officers, but no later than September 1, 1999.

Dr. Rooke is at present Associate Vice-President (Academic) at the University of Guelph. Her academic discipline is English.

Introduction

This report is written to provide the Board of Regents, members, and friends of The University of Winnipeg with information about the process whereby Dr. Rooke was selected to be our President. There are four sections to the main body of the Report:

- The Candidate
- The Background
- The Process
- Statistics

The first person plural is used throughout this Report in reference to the full Presidential Search and Nominating Committee.

The Candidate

Dr. Constance Rooke is a graduate of Smith College. She obtained her M.A. at Tulane University, and her Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her doctoral dissertation was *Character as a Creative Act: The Early Fiction of Wright Morris*. She has recently attended the Bryn Mawr Summer Institute for Women in Higher Education Administration and the University of Manitoba Senior University Administrators' Course.

As Associate Vice-President at Guelph, she had executive responsibility for a number of departments: the Registrar's Office, the Office of Open Learning, the Centre for International Programs, Teaching Support

Services, and the Office of First Year Studies. She also had executive responsibility for Guelph's strategic planning process as Chair of the Strategic Planning Implementation Committee, and for enrolment management as Chair of the Enrolment Management Committee.

Prior to becoming Associate Vice-President, she was Chair of Guelph's English Department. She co-organized the Eden Mills Writers' Festival and has remained very active in PEN, the world-wide organization concerned with freedom of speech and advocacy for imprisoned writers.

Before moving to Guelph, Dr. Rooke was a member of the English Department at the University of Victoria for eighteen years. While at Victoria, she helped to found the Women's Studies program, edited *The Malahat Review*, and directed the Learning and Teaching Centre.

Dr. Rooke has distinguished herself throughout her academic career both in teaching and in research. In recent years, she has added significant administrative accomplishments to her portfolio. While doing all of these, she has been very active in promoting her discipline to the wider community.

These few paragraphs convey only a terse summary of some of her major accomplishments. Despite their brevity, they convey clearly Dr. Rooke's status as teacher, scholar, administrator, and supporter of writing. We believe that she exhibits the high degree of scholarship and experience necessary to lead a proud institution of higher learning, and we are unanimous in recommending that she be appointed President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Winnipeg.

The Background

Early in 1998, Dr. Marsha Hanen informed the Chair of the Board of Regents that she wished to step down as President and Vice-Chancellor, and asked that the Board establish a Presidential Search and Nominating Committee to seek her successor.

At its meeting of January 26, 1998, the Board established the Presidential Search and Nominating Committee; over the next weeks, various constituent bodies

named their representatives. The ultimate composition of the Committee was:

Dr. Alaa Abd-El-Aziz - *Senate*
Dr. Sohrab Abizadeh - *UWFA*
Mr. Keith Black - *Board of Regents*
Ms Judy Dyck - *Support Staff*
Ms Patty Hawkins - *Support Staff*
Dr. Frank Hechter - *Board of Regents*
Mr. Matt Henderson - *Student*
Dr. Judith Kearns - *Senate*
Mr. Garry Leach - *Board of Regents*
Dr. Bill Rannie - *Senate*
Ms Nicole Rosevere - *Student*
Ms Ingra Schellenberg - *Student*
Dr. Carol Shields - *Chancellor*
The Hon. Judge Ray Wyant - *Board of Regents*
Dr. Roger Kingsley - *Secretary (non-voting)*

Dr. Frank Hechter, Chair of the Board of Regents, chaired the Search Committee.

Subsequent to the original selection of the Committee, Jeri Breckman was added as the Committee's support person, and Mr. Jim Lundy of the Landmark Consulting Group was added as search consultant, both in non-voting capacities.

During the summer, Ms Ingra Schellenberg moved to Kingston; she did not participate in the Committee's final deliberations.

The Committee met twenty-four times from February 26 until November 15.

During February and March, we organized ourselves, determined that we would use a search consultant, considered four search consultants, interviewed two, and selected Jim Lundy.

During April, we met with a number of members of The University of Winnipeg to gather their views on the qualities we ought to be seeking in the new President and on the issues facing The University of Winnipeg. The consultation culminated on April 29 in an Open Meeting.

During May, we developed a candidate Profile based on our consultations. The Profile was taken to Senate on May 19, and approved by the Board of Regents on May 25.

During June, July, and August, we met several times to review the candidate list. The list was partially reduced during this period, and the consultant was asked to do preliminary reference checks on the partially-reduced list.

In September, the list of candidates was reduced to five whom we intended to interview. The consultant was asked to do detailed reference checks on the five short-listed candidates.

During October and early November, we did our detailed preparation for the interviews. This included drafting of interview questions, deciding which of us would ask which questions, and refining the questions. At this time, we asked the broader community for suggestions concerning issues which should be raised during the interviews. We also developed an interview strategy which ensured that candidates were treated equitably.

On November 13, 14, and 15, we interviewed the five short-listed candidates. On the afternoon and evening of November 15, we determined unanimously that we would recommend Dr. Rooke as our next President and Vice-Chancellor.

During the past two weeks, Dr. Hechter, on behalf of the Board Officers, has successfully negotiated a contract with Dr. Rooke, subject to approval by the Board of Dr. Rooke's appointment.

Our work was accomplished generally by consensus. At the end, a formal vote of the Committee was taken; the result was the unanimous decision of the Committee to recommend Dr. Rooke.

Throughout the search, we have kept the community informed of our progress by a variety of means.

Statistics

We considered 34 candidates.

Gender:	12	Female
	22	Male
Employment	2	Outside universities
	32	Within universities
Rank/Position	16	Senior academic administrators
	8	Deans
	1	Chairs
	7	Faculty members
	2	Other

Those employed outside universities had appropriate academic credentials. Three of the faculty members and one of the other candidates were former deans or senior academic administrators.

Conclusion

We had an excellent field of candidates from which to choose. We are delighted to be able to recommend Dr. Constance Rooke from this list.

Respectfully submitted

Dr. Frank J. Hechter

Chair, Presidential Search and Nominating Committee

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Throughout her career, she has written numerous books as well as articles, addresses, critiques and short stories. For almost a decade, she was the editor of *The Malahat Review*, an award-winning publication that nurtures Canadian writing talent. Together with her husband, Leon Rooke, a Governor General Award-winning writer, she recently co-authored a textbook. The couple are also the co-founders and co-organizers of the Eden Mills Writers' Festival, one of the most successful literary festivals in the country. An artistic gene definitely runs in the Rooke family, as their son Jonathan is the Technical Director of Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto.

Her administrative track record is also impressive. According to University of Guelph President Mordechai Rozanski, "She has been a passionate advocate of liberal learning, has fostered innovation and has championed excellence and change. Her significant role at Guelph can be highlighted by her leading contributions to strategic planning, to human rights policy development and to the inventory process of our upcoming fundraising campaign."

Dr. Rozanski adds that as a member of the Vice-President's Academic Council and its vice-chair, Dr. Rooke has been notable for "her profound intellectual grasp of the academic issues the council addresses." He says, "Her deeply held commitment to teaching and learning excellence has been the foundation of the imaginative work she has done on this council and across the university."

Her role as co-chair of the University of Guelph's Strategic Planning Commission has also been crucial. She was the principal author of the strategic plan and then served as chair of the implementation committee, explains Dr. Rozanski.

As Associate Vice-President Academic, Dr. Rooke manages several areas including the Offices of the Registrar, Open Learning and First Year Studies as well as the Centre for International Programs and Teaching Support Services. Her view of enrolment management encompasses the big picture: "We need a clear understanding of the creation of the enrolment story and it's a circular one—starting from the very first contact prospective students have with the uni-

versity, to offering a positive, memorable experience while they are here, to creating loyal alumni who continue to support the University and tell others about their experience."

The new President has had considerable experience in fundraising and government relations both in the university and external organizations. At The University of Winnipeg, as in all post-secondary institutions, she believes that we need a clear message and "to articulate a true and compelling story about value and about our needs."

Dr. Rooke believes strongly that the public must be made aware of the continuing value of post-secondary education and, in particular, liberal arts and sciences degrees. "It's a huge challenge for us to communicate the personal, social and economic value of liberal education to society, and to do this in a language that is true to the University's understanding of itself, but still compelling to outsiders. Liberal education must be responsive to a changing world—and it must retain its core values."

Dr. Rooke is very excited about her appointment and looks forward to being at the helm of Winnipeg's downtown University. "I can imagine, as president, that I will be able to really get to know people on campus. The size of the University makes it so much easier to speak across disciplines and feel a sense of community. I am grateful for this opportunity."

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