

## **ROB MACISAAC'S REMARKS FOR PRESIDENT'S BREAKFAST SEPTEMBER 2, 2009**

Thank you Sam. Wow, it's great that so many of you are here this morning.

And thank you Rob Prichard for leading off our breakfast. You're a great opening act. And I can't say enough about what an honour it is to be working with you on the future of this great city region. But now I need you to get back to the office and get back to work.

So this is a pretty cool way to ring in the new year at Mohawk. On Monday, we had a groundbreaking at the Fennell Campus. Construction started on the new Mohawk Centre for Entrepreneurship, Learning and Innovation. It's a new three-level building that's part of a major 30 million dollar makeover at our largest... and oldest... campus.

On Tuesday, orientation started for new students and apprentices. 2009 sees us welcoming more than 6,000 first-year students. I want to thank the student services and academic teams that put together our Weeks of Welcome Orientation on all of our campuses. They also ran some pretty innovative programs during the summer to help students get ready for college and hit the ground running.

And this morning, we're having breakfast together and making plans for a pretty interesting and exciting year.

All that and we're only half way through the week. Just three days into the new year... a year that as I said is shaping up to be something special.

I want to quickly highlight what we'll be doing and where we'll be going in the year ahead. On your tables, you'll find a summary of Mohawk's new strategic plan.

A lot of what's in the strategic plan will be very familiar to you. That's because you helped draft the plan and refine it over the past year through a series of consultations.

The plan makes eminent sense to me. That's because it plays to our strengths. It builds on our successes. And it takes what Mohawk does best and puts some serious institutional muscle behind it.

Our plan has three priorities – quality, innovation and sustainability. From the classroom to the boardroom, we're going to be focused on quality, innovation and sustainability. Relentlessly focused.

Let's start with quality. Quality matters at Mohawk because our dedication to excellence will define our reputation. And it's our reputation that brings us students...students who will make Mohawk their first choice for a quality education and a great college experience.

When it comes to quality in the classroom, students already give Mohawk straight As. You're earning high marks on key performance indicators and feedback on teaching surveys. Our Continuing Education instructors once again rank number one in the province. Employers give Mohawk top marks for the quality of our graduates.

AND we met all five of the best practice benchmarks in our first time through the Provincial quality assurance audit this past winter. In some respects that is a tribute to the team that worked so hard to get us ready for the audit, but mostly it's a ringing endorsement for the quality of our programs and there are a lot of people here who make that happen.

Quality is also about delivering great service. It's about treating students the way we'd want Mohawk to treat our sons and daughters...our grandkids...our husbands, wives, brothers and sisters.

You know, every day, we're presented with thousands of moments of truth...moments to prove, in big and small ways, that students and learning are at the heart of all we do. Moments to deliver exceptional service. Frankly, this is an area where we have to do better.

We've begun to put a new focus on this by creating a group dedicated to great student services headed up by Rosemary Knechtel. Rosemary is assembling a great team who I think will really deliver for us. And in the months ahead, we're going to launch a new training program to define Mohawk's service promise...and to define how we will deliver great service to our students and to one another.

Beyond quality in teaching and services, Mohawk is also going to give our students first class places to learn. That's why we invested 27 million dollars in Stoney Creek at the STARRT Institute. That's why we're investing at least 30 million dollars at the Fennell Campus to renew and enlarge our facilities. And providing great places to learn is why we're in serious talks about a new vision for our Brantford campus.

The second pillar of our strategic plan is innovation. Innovation is about finding exciting opportunities for learning, and discovering new and better ways of teaching and doing business. We need to make it second nature for all of us.

I recently asked Ted Scott to take on the role of Chief Innovation Officer for Mohawk. I'm really enthusiastic about the talent and leadership he brings to that role. And I've made it clear to Ted that nothing less than a stunning success in this area is acceptable.

But Ted is going to need the cooperation and participation of each and every one of us to create a culture of innovation here at the college. What will success look like?

Well, once students get here, they're going to do things they can't do anywhere else. We're going to connect them with brilliant people, big ideas and a world where there's no limits to what's possible.

Innovation will give Mohawk students a competitive edge. When they go for job interviews, they won't be talking about what they could do. They'll be talking about what they've already done at Mohawk. Mohawk education will get our grads the job interview...but it's our focus on innovation that will land them the jobs.

Just look at what's happening with our Electronic Health Records project. It's a project that's being driven by students and recent graduates. And in return, they're building a really impressive and highly sought after set of skills. We have industry partners coming to Mohawk not only to check out the project, but to scope out our students and grads.

On the strength and the success of that project, we're launching a new applied research initiative focused on energy technologies and smart grids. Like health informatics, it's an emerging field and Mohawk is looking to play a leadership role.

We'll be counting on our college partners to help drive our innovation. To bring us problems to solve. Ideas to implement. And opportunities to seize.

We'll be equal to the challenge.

Which brings us to our third strategic priority of sustainability. Now, many of us think of sustainability in terms of greening the college. That's an important part of sustainability and it's a personal priority of mine. Reducing our environmental footprint is our responsibility as global citizens. And increasingly our students will expect no less of us.

But sustainability is also about being an efficient and effective organization. It's about making smart decisions. Many of you have no doubt been following the restructuring of the administrative group we have been working on since my arrival. I want to tell you I will be sending out an announcement detailing the next level of restructuring this coming Thursday together with announcements concerning appointments and postings for new positions. I am very confident that the restructuring that is underway will result in a more effective, smarter organization.

Having said that, I'm sure I'll hear about it on Ask the President if you disagree. By the way, thanks for all your questions and suggestions. It has been admittedly a little overwhelming but all in all a good experience.

Sustainability is also about conducting our business to positively impact people. That means taking our rightful place at the table in this community – helping to make Hamilton the best place in Canada to raise a child. We have so many bright lights on our staff and faculty and in our student body. We owe it to this city to bring some of that horsepower into creating a better community.

That means getting more involved than ever before in the boards and committees and task forces that are driving this region. I want to thank those of you who are already doing this either in your personal time or through innovative programming at the college. It's really important.

So we're considering social, environmental and economic issues in a comprehensive, systemic and integrated way. And we're aiming for decisions that add value across all three bottom lines. Decisions that enhance social well being, improve our environment, and strengthen economic prosperity.

The summary at your table provides some of the details on how we plan to move forward on quality, innovation and sustainability. I'm confident that you will find something that applies to you and the work you do at the College. Whether it's adding real world experience to the curriculum, developing new partnerships, or ensuring that Mohawk is accessible for those seeking a new opportunity.

But these plans are only as good as the people who make them happen. People with the drive and determination to get the job done. People who move fast. Work hard. And never lose sight of the big picture.

For those very reasons, I believe our strategic plan is in the best, and most capable of hands. Your hands.

Let me say that I think that staff and faculty are doing a remarkable job. At Spring Convocation, I met the graduates that you taught and served. I shook forty-five hundred hands. I met the future and, thanks to you, it's bright.

But the proof of our strategic plan is in the results we will achieve going forward. And I can think of no more desirable result than the satisfaction of our students. So I want to invite you to join with me in a journey to making Mohawk first in class in overall student satisfaction.

We can't do it all at once. But over the next few years, we must strive for nothing less than having the most satisfied students of any large college in Ontario. As you know, students across the province rate their colleges every year. Students rate the quality of teaching, the quality of service and the quality of facilities.

Being first among our comparators is an ambitious goal to be sure. But if we believe in the strategies and objectives of our new plan, we should surely be confident of the results they'll produce. So I challenge you to join with me in making this plan a reality. And in claiming bragging rights as the best urban college in the GTHA, and ultimately the Province. Why would we shoot for anything less. Our students certainly deserve no less. And I am certain we are capable of more.

So here's to a great year and a new course for all of us. Thank you for taking up this challenge. And thank you for putting students and learning at the heart of all you do.