

(Presentation recording may vary from original script)

- Good afternoon, everyone.
- When I think about how to describe the last year at MacEwan, one word keeps coming to mind: motion. Motion that drives innovation, sparks ideas and gives meaning and purpose to the work we do.
- Our students are constantly on the move. Our city continues to rise. The needs of our communities and industries are rapidly changing.
- Everything around us is moving. MacEwan is changing and adapting, too. We look at what the future holds and innovate to support those needs.
- That is what the Perpetual Motion pillar embodies in our *Teaching Greatness* vision. Not movement for the sake of movement. Not growth for the sake of growth. But movement with purpose and meaning.
- One of the most obvious examples of motion in the past year is the exciting new building reaching completion on 109th Street.
- We are just months away from opening Building 12, the new home of the Triffo School of Business. This building is more than bricks and glass. It's a stunning addition to our campus and our city.
- It's a place where students will be inspired. Ideas will be tested. Curiosity piqued. People will bump into one another and discover a connection they didn't expect.

- As a hub for innovation and creativity, the impact on our students, business and community will be transformative.
- I am also pleased to share that the building is on time, in scope and on budget.
- This building is the culmination of a lot of great work from a united, tenacious and committed community. I'm incredibly grateful for the faculty, staff, students and community leaders who came together to support MacEwan in this ambitious goal.
- I can't wait to welcome all of you to discover it for yourselves.
- Several of our donors who contributed to the MacEwan Means Business campaign are with us today. Please join me in showing our appreciation for their support. <lead applause>
- In April, we announced that the new building will be home to the Triffo School of Business in honour of philanthropist, community builder and Chairman Emeritus of Stantec, Ron Triffo.
- Ron has been a longtime friend of mine and of MacEwan. His support for the Triffo Theatre has already left a lasting mark on our university. And now, by lending his name to the Triffo School of Business, he is helping build an exciting future for our students and our campus.
- We're also grateful to the Government of Alberta for their financial support. Our provincial government partners recognized this expansion as an investment not only in MacEwan, but in Edmonton and its downtown core.

- As more students, staff and faculty converge on our growing campus, Edmonton's downtown will reap the benefits – more energy, more commerce, more vibrancy – helping to make downtown Edmonton the place to be.
- We are already feeling that momentum. Over the last year, we've worked alongside developers to address the need for affordable housing for our students. I'm excited to see these new options become available – these new spaces are not just for our students, they're helping our city grow. More people living downtown sparks energy and momentum.
- MacEwan's impact is being noticed. Our students, communities and partners recognize the relevance of what we're doing.
- We help our students build meaningful futures. We serve as a catalyst in community building. And we ensure business and industry have the skilled talent they need to grow and thrive.
- What we do here matters.
- Relevance can mean different things. To me, it means connecting with our community. Listening, and being aware. Then using that foresight to find innovative ways to meet the needs of today, and the future.
- More students are choosing MacEwan as their first post-secondary choice.
- Our student population grew by 9.1 per cent last year, and this fall, we welcomed 23,000 students to campus. Now that is motion.

- While some of this growth reflects demographic increases in post-secondary aged students, MacEwan is attracting more than “our share” of students in the market.
- Students are choosing MacEwan because they see something here that matters to them; something that will help them move forward in their lives. They see MacEwan as a place where they “fit,” where they feel a sense of belonging and where their dreams take shape.
- MacEwan’s relevance is also brought to life every day through the work of our faculty. I was reminded of that recently in a way that really stayed with me.
- I was walking through Roundhouse and came across a group of professors and researchers talking together.
- There was no committee, no mandate, no formal agenda.
- This group of passionate faculty members were simply talking about what they could do to better assist our students in finding meaningful careers when they graduate. The discussion was practical. The approach was thoughtful and caring. They saw a need and gathered together to find ways to address it.
- That, to me, is MacEwan. People who care deeply about students and are focused on making their experience at MacEwan valuable through problem-solving and creative solutions.
- I’m especially inspired by the exciting projects in AI and immersive learning being carried out on our campus – technical advancements moving at lightning speed.

- One of our students, Jehdi Aizon, used her computer science and design skills to build a virtual reality simulation tool that helps social work students learn how to navigate therapy conversations. She also helped create a virtual reality simulation of an IV pump, giving our nursing students extra practice opportunities before treating real life patients.
- Jehdi didn't do this alone. Under the supervision of Dr. Sam Qorbani, Jehdi worked with Kealey Dube, Danielle Larocque and Melanie Neumeier.
- That mentorship gave Jehdi practical experience and interdisciplinary connections she continues to rely on since graduating with a Bachelor of Science last year.
- More students are benefiting from research experiences to expand and enhance their studies. Last year we offered over 400 students research assistantships and we're well on our way to our target of 500 by 2030.
- And last year, MacEwan received \$5.3 million in external grants for research. This is a testament to our faculty's strength as researchers and thought leaders who are testing assumptions, pushing boundaries and seeking out what's next.
- Some of those grants were firsts for MacEwan.
- Dr. Emily Milne received MacEwan's first Social Sciences and Humanities grant – a \$2.5 million investment over seven years – to identify inequities and improve education across Alberta.

- And Dr. Farzan Baradaran Rahimi was awarded MacEwan's first New Frontiers in Research Fund grant. He'll be exploring how virtual reality can strengthen mutual understanding and foster empathy with racialized and culturally distinct communities.
- Research projects at MacEwan offer high-quality learning opportunities for our students. For example, MacEwan's first spin-out company, Pimasens, had 30 students work with them to further develop their product – a sensor that gives farmers a way to test soil and reduce fertilizer costs.
- Community partnerships also give students these opportunities. This year I had the pleasure of signing two MOUs with the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation and the Ukrainian Foundation for College Education.
- These MOUs spark discussions about how we can benefit one another, and explore opportunities to work together, whether that be through research, student projects or work-integrated learning placements.
- Dr. Olenka Bilash said the work MacEwan does is strengthening resources connected to Ukraine and its diaspora. And Mark Prefontaine said their work with MacEwan helps ensure they can provide risk management tools and capital to the agriculture sector, and position them as an employer of choice for MacEwan grads.
- Relationships like these ones are a key driver behind our success in making work-integrated learning the norm for our students.

- Today, 100 per cent of our programs include a work-integrated learning component, well above our 2025 target. Students across all disciplines have the opportunity to get hands-on experience, and build relationships with employers before they graduate.
- To date, 34 per cent of MacEwan students have completed a WIL placement, which is a four per cent increase compared to this time last year.
- And that work is turning heads.
- For example, a partnership with the Edmonton Journal saw a team of 15 students, led by MacEwan Associate Professor of Journalism Steve Lillebuen, analyze the province's restaurant inspection system.
- After months of work, the Journal published a three-part series on food safety in the city's restaurants. That series sparked an overhaul of the inspection system, and won gold at the Canadian Association of Journalists' awards in June.
- That is passion with purpose.
- Supporting student success also means we look beyond the classroom.
- Our students are facing new challenges and obstacles. Housing, funding, family and job commitments. It can be difficult for our students to make it all work.
- Today's students need flexibility. Attending classes on a strict schedule doesn't always fit.

- Our work developing micro-credentials and expanding Spring/Summer courses is paying off as we offer students greater flexibility and control over what they learn and when.
- Our School of Continuing Education has developed 16 micro-credentials and had over 1,355 enrolments since it began offering them. And they are offering valuable courses in AI, robotics, governance and drone training.
- Skills that are in high demand in the fields of defence and community safety.
- We've also made great strides to offer our students flexibility by offering more Spring/Summer courses over the last few years.
- Last year we offered 384 courses over the Spring/Summer term. What did that look like on campus?
- MacEwan's halls were busier than they've ever been in the spring and summer, with students studying and going to class. We had over 1,700 full-time equivalents enrolled in those courses – we're offering the flexibility students want.
- We also understand the financial pressures students are facing, and we have developed ways to alleviate stress so our students can concentrate on learning.
- We expanded our food security and affordability program. The Italian Centre Shop, kb&co and The Little Potato Company held pop-up markets for our students. And with the support of Ariel del Rosario –

owner of Filistix – and Aramark, we hosted cooking classes that taught students how to make great food on a budget.

- We've also ensured more students have access to a university education by offering \$10 million in scholarships, awards and bursaries.
- As noted earlier we expanded our off-campus housing program. With Westrich Pacific and Beljan Development joining Qualico Properties and Maclab Development Group, we doubled the number of properties offering affordable options to MacEwan students.
- More students living, studying and connecting downtown is just one way we're helping Edmonton grow.
- Our Research Institute for Urban Wellness, directed by Dr. Marielle Papin, has 20 researchers across various disciplines exploring innovative ways to approach topics like climate policy, international city networks and how cities are designed and resourced to support childhood development.
- MacEwan also serves downtown as a hub for local events. Last year, we hosted a variety of events on campus, from cat festivals to album releases to conferences – bringing over 160,000 people together downtown.
- And we hosted our first Downtown Artist Amble where musically talented MacEwan alumni and friends performed across campus. Visitors walked the halls, stopping to enjoy performers and experience our university.

- We also invited alumni to learn from local leaders Darci Walker, President of The Brick and Mike Saunders, Senior Vice President of Qualico Properties, through the Leadership Unplugged series.
- And in June, we invited community members and faculty to a talk with Distinguished Alumni honoree Dr. Ryan Payne, who is a respected voice in global artificial intelligence policy.
- This year we have more exciting events planned, including North of Now – our next Chancellor Speaker Series event that is being co-hosted with *The Walrus* magazine.
- So where are we now, and what does the next year hold for us?
- We are in a very good place and our partners agree.
- Ninety per cent of alumni surveyed in fall 2025 said they would recommend MacEwan as a great place to study.
- And speaking of alumni, we're thrilled to have our 100,000th alumnus cross the stage at fall convocation this year.
- And in our recent Belonging at MacEwan survey, 83 per cent of our faculty and staff feel a sense of purpose in their work, adding credence to MacEwan being named as one of Alberta's Top Employers in 2026. Belonging is a key factor to happiness and satisfaction. This matters to me.
- Our friends and donors also view MacEwan, and our students, as a solid investment.

- Since 2020/21, MacEwan has raised nearly \$10 million in external funding for student awards.
- At a time when our university is evolving, this support illustrates our donors believing we're on the right track.
- Some of you may be wondering about the potential impact of the Government of Alberta's work to redesign post-secondary funding.
- Alberta is developing a funding formula based on three dimensions: enrolment growth, community impact and base operating costs.
- We are optimistic about this funding framework.
- Our enrolment is strong and continues to rise.
- Our community impact is impressive and continues to grow.
- And funding for base operating costs asks us to be efficient – which we are.
- Ninety per cent of our alumni stay in Alberta, MacEwan nurses, artists, accountants, social workers and leaders are helping communities thrive.
- Look at programs we recently introduced – the Bachelor of Public Safety and Justice degree, Data Science major, Environmental Sciences major and a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Behaviour Analysis. Programs established to address current and emerging community and industry needs.
- There's also a need to create stronger student pathways to make post-secondary education accessible to all students.

- Which is why we're currently exploring the development of a MacEwan STEM Integration Hub – a province-wide investment that integrates an expanded undergraduate STEM education with an innovative Grades 10-12 high school, creating a seamless pathway that connects secondary students to post-secondary education and Alberta's workforce.
- Nothing currently exists at this scale or level of integration in Alberta. This is a new model for developing Alberta's future STEM talent.
- Alberta's economy is changing quickly, and our students need the technical fluency and applied experience to help us lead that change. Our industry and research partners are helping us connect this vision to Alberta's workforce needs, and we're grateful for their early engagement.
- But as we look at this project, it also gives us an opportunity to broaden our sense of place.
- MacEwan will always be deeply connected to downtown Edmonton. But I believe our future also includes taking a stronger role in Alberta and Canada's north.
- Edmonton is the most northern major city in North America. What does that mean for a university like MacEwan? How can we support northern populations, regional development and strong communities?
- We're starting to explore what that means. We know the success of the north will need people proficient with science and technology.

- What if we used our STEM Integration Hub to bring together urban and northern Indigenous youth together to explore AI and STEM alongside Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, researchers, entrepreneurs and industry leaders?
- This would provide meaningful experiences to students, and encourage them to pursue an education in those fields when they graduate high school.
- We're also exploring how MacEwan can contribute to Canada's defence and security needs – an important issue in the north. Initiatives such as cybersecurity and drones intersect with our existing programs and the talent our public-sector partners need.
- These efforts are all shaped and guided by the directions established in our *Teaching Greatness* vision.
- Those directions – as relevant today as they were when the vision was established in 2022 – provide us with a roadmap for our continued growth and evolution as an institution focused on relevance and innovation.
- I am proud of our faculty who bring their passions to class and evolve their curriculum to reflect the latest developments in their fields. They also inspire our students to explore how they can link their own passions to their careers.
- Staff who find new ways to support students and help them grow.
- Students who are willing to test themselves and discover what they are capable of.

- And donors, community partners, businesses and governments who are proud to invest in what comes next.
- Look at where MacEwan is today.
- Building 12 is almost open, and needs just a few finishing touches, like a new name.
- Our students are growing in number and ambition. Our research is advancing its impact through innovation and creativity. Our connections to industry and community are building.
- And our sense of what is possible is growing, too. We have momentum. Now let's keep moving.
- Thank you.

<pause for applause>

- Now, I'd like to invite Grant Fedoruk to join me on stage for a chat. Grant is an award-winning physiotherapist, co-founder of Leading Edge Physiotherapy and MacEwan alumnus. In 2022, Grant received the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal, awarded by the Government of Alberta for significant contributions to the province and its citizens.
- At MacEwan, his dedication to community is best known through his support most recently demonstrated when he served as emcee at our annual Backstage Pass event, a signature part of MacEwan's Distinguished Visiting Artist in Country Music initiative.

- Grant is known nationally for his podcast called Life Shouldn't Hurt, which he graciously brought me on as a guest. He is all about motion and how to get people back to being in optimal states of movement.