2022
ANNUAL REPORT

RENISON
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
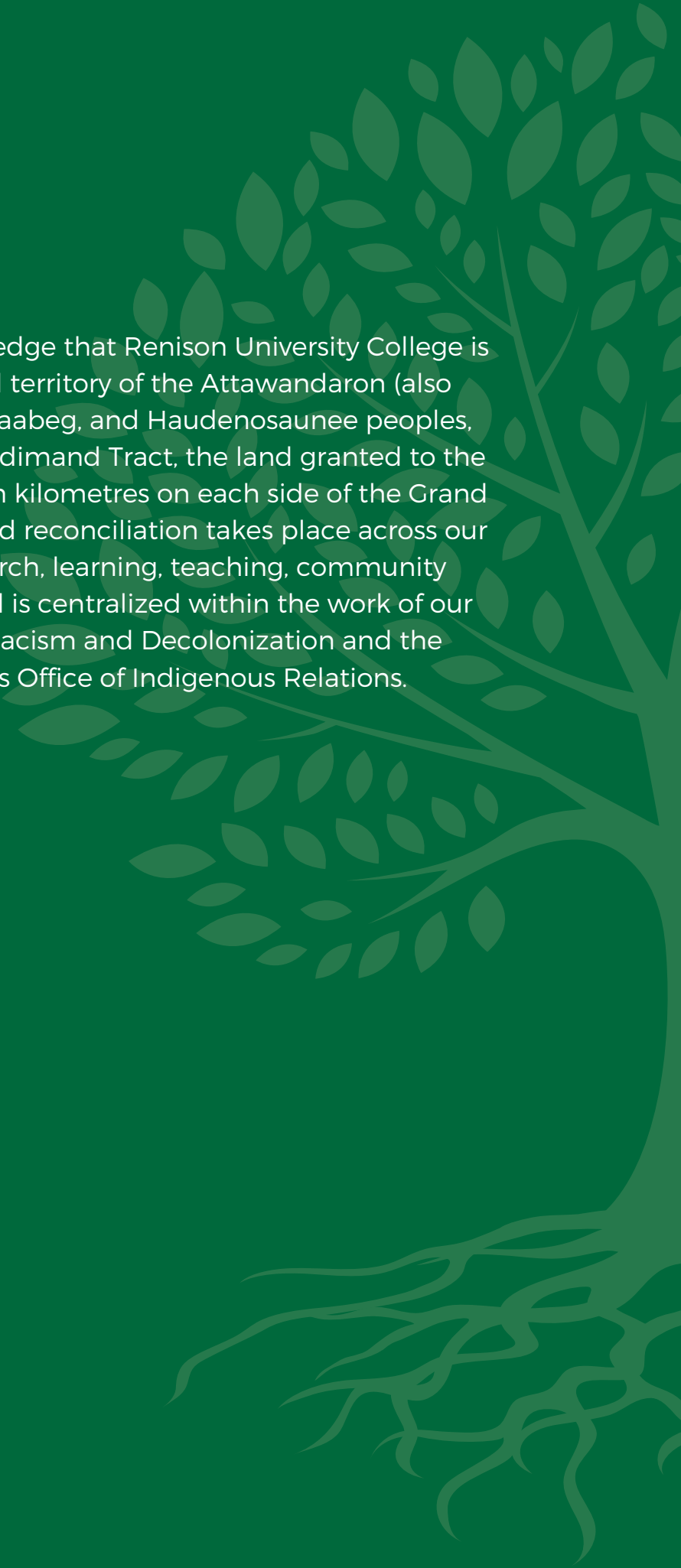
AFFILIATED WITH THE **UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO**

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach, and is centralized within the work of our Spokescouncil on Anti-Racism and Decolonization and the University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

KAREN SPENCER

As we emerge from a world-wide pandemic, and work to establish a new normal, two words come to mind: innovation and investment. Fortunately, innovation is, and has always been, at the forefront of the Renison community. As we establish a new "normal" we know there will be no going back to the way things were. As Board Chair, I am excited about the future of Renison, and what is yet to come.

A short time ago, who could have imagined that day-to-day virtual meetings would become common practice. As we look to the future, we can't imagine living without our virtual connections. Students, faculty, and supporters of Renison have relied on the investments we have made in technology. Investments that have built capacity, increased efficiency, and improved accessibility. At times, it has been difficult to make such investments, especially in the face of reduced revenue streams. What we have learned though is, even in times of restraint, strategic investments are necessary for us to move forward and to thrive!

The theme of our annual report this year is infrastructure. While most of us think of infrastructure as bricks and mortar, it is much more than that. For Renison, infrastructure includes a focus on health, wellness, equity, improving communication and creating a culture that inspires us to make a difference in the world. We have come through the last year stronger and with renewed commitment to reach higher levels. Like many organizations, there will be challenges ahead. On behalf of the Board, I would like to convey our confidence in the capacity of Renison to be a leader in higher education, research, innovation, and in partnership with community to address the complexities and inequities of our world.

A special thank you to our President and her team for the leadership they provide, to the faculty and staff for always reaching higher levels, to the students for their enthusiasm and inspiration… and to all the friends of Renison who help us reach our goals. Together, we are making a difference!

Warmly,

Karen Spencer, Chair, Board of Governors
Renison University College

NO ART WITHOUT STRUCTURE

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Centuries ago, Leonardo da Vinci reflected on his relationship with art and the place of creativity in the human story. He said simply, "Without structure, there is no art."

This year's Annual Meeting is considering the life of Renison in relation to our strategic goals in the area of Infrastructure. While some may argue that this is not the most interesting of foci for a world such as Renison, I would argue that without attention to the complexity and beauty of infrastructure, our visions for the work we undertake would remain just that-vision without substance, hopes that are never realized. If you have travelled to places in the world where there is limited or no infrastructure you will fully apprehend my meaning. Without health care, taxation systems which work effectively to support society's larger vision of itself, without technology that empowers, without garbage removal and sanitary disposal, without a plan for roads and sustainable water systems human communities cannot survive, let alone thrive. Certainly, this is also true for Renison. Holding its bold vision which reaches toward the realization of a world under one sky - a world which through education empowers the possibility of a more liveable world where all may stand with dignity and in peace, we see that our vision is empty without effective infrastructure.

Over the past several years, the impact of the pandemic notwithstanding, Renison has continued to move forward with key infrastructure goals: streamlining services; improving technology supports and the use of technology in teaching and communication; refining financial, budgeting and accounting systems and practices; adapting and refining database systems; embracing Green initiatives and expanding policy and procedure implementations

which support our commitment to equity, fairness and inclusion in the workplace. All of this has been possible through the work teams which we name under the umbrella of central administration: Human Resources, IT, External Relations and Communications, Facilities, Food Service, and Finance. The daily labours of these core team members create the structure through which the art of Renison becomes possible. I am so very grateful to be a part of a system with such fine team members and such unstinting commitment to the corporate well-being of our community and its vision. I invite you to join me in celebrating these hands which hold our world.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wendy L. Fletcher
President and Vice-Chancellor
Renison University College

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
HIGHLIGHTS
In thousands of dollars

GIVING AT RENISON
May 1, 2021 - April 30, 2022

Statement of Financial Position

Cash > 5,843
Investments > 3,135
Capital Assets > 30,829
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities > 1,776
Student deposits & fee advances > 629
Debt > 10,163
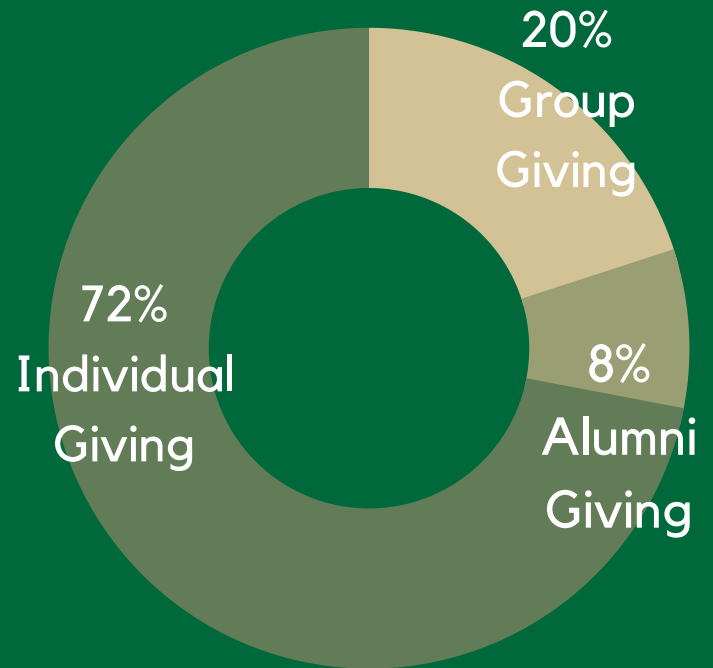Employee future benefits obligation > 3,264

Statement of Operations

Government grants > 5,901
Tuition > 11,789
Residence fees & Conferences > 1,064
Food Services > 628
Salaries, wages & benefits > 16,710
University services > 1,500
Contracted Services > 166
Utilities, repairs & maintenance > 384
Office, general & admin > 201
Academic support costs > 370

Total Operating Budget = $21 million

20%
Group
Giving

72%
Individual
Giving

8%
Alumni
Giving

Cash and Pledges total =
$365,289

Total funds awarded =
$306,811

COURSE ENROLLMENTS

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND INNOVATION
6,472
Social Development Studies, School of Social Work

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH LANGUAGES AND CULTURE
4,486
Applied Language Studies, English for Multilingual Speakers, graduate and undergraduate, English, History, Religious Studies, East Asian Studies, Studies in Islamic and Arab Cultures

CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION
1,643
Renison Institute of Ministry, Sakura Japanese Language School, Renison International Office, non-credit Chinese, Japanese and Korean language, English Language Institute, Indigenous Studies

Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Goal 4

Infrastructure

Renison will refine and support a responsive infrastructure appropriate to the fulfillment of its educational mission and the well-being of our communities.

4.1 Improve use of technology in support of programs, classroom learning, on-line learning, international partnerships and engagements, marketing and recruitment, and College administrative systems.

4.2 Refine and continue development of equity processes and practices for a safe and healthy workplace, with particular attention to inclusion of Indigenous voices across the College.

4.3 Complete policy development in all areas of the College, including improvement in communication of those policies with ease of access.

4.4 Undertake the third floor build for the Academic centre to address urgent and immediate space needs. Begin a process of planning for a larger build- including the addition of new residence spaces- to ensure current and emerging program needs can be met and that Renison remains competitive in the residence options available on campus for UWaterloo students.

4.5 Continue refinement of financial systems and budget model in support of efficient, effective, and transparent processes ensuring compliance with government regulations and GAAP Principles.

4.6 Continue refinement of operational systems in support of an efficient, effective, user-friendly and safe workplace.

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF RENISON'S BUDGET

From an infrastructure perspective, the budget plays a dual role.

The budget itself shapes infrastructure. Decisions related to new builds, expansion of teaching and learning space and whether or not upgrades can be made to IT infrastructure are all determined by the budget.

The budget shapes infrastructure, but it can also be shaped by infrastructure.

Just prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, the decision was made to move away from traditional incremental budgeting process in favour of an accountability-based budget model. This approach is more transparent and allows all operating units to have a better understanding of how decisions within their units will impact Renison's overall operating budget. The decision to adopt an accountability-based budget model proved timely, as the pandemic introduced new pressures on the budget. Each unit could clearly see how its decisions would impact the bottom line.

For budgetary purposes, Renison is effectively divided into three main categories: 1) Degree (including the School of Social Work, Social Development Studies, Culture and Language Studies, and English for Multi-Lingual Speakers); 2) Student Affairs and Community Education ((SACE) including Community Education, Residences, and Food Services); and 3) Renison Centre (including all supporting departments such as Facilities, HR, Finance, and IT). The Degree units and the SACE units are all considered revenue generating; the Renison Centre, as an administrative support unit, is primarily operated through disbursements. The revenue generating units (degree and SACE) incur the expenses that are allocated to them; these units cover a proportional share of the expenses of the Centre.

An important presupposition of this budget model is the understanding that the work conducted by the Degree programs and SACE is vital to the Mission of Renison. A deficit within a given unit does not put into question its value to the institution. It is understood that all work conducted at Renison is critical to the mission of the College and, therefore, all units must have access to the space and services they require to support and advance its objectives and outcomes.

Since adopting this budget structure, all units have been more engaged and invested in the budget process and how it impacts their areas of responsibility.

IMPROVING RENISON'S ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Renison is built by its people. The students, staff, faculty, alumni and donors who have contributed to creating the Renison story are not only important to our College's history, but are also central to our future. The importance of how we organize, update and communicate with our people – our organizational infrastructure' – cannot be overstated.

Renison, like many universities and colleges, uses Raiser's Edge (RE) as its customer relationship management (CRM) system. For many years, the College was using an older version of RE which was difficult to maintain and keep updated and which did not communicate with our financial system.

Renison's Finance department has worked very closely with External Relations and Communications to upgrade the RE system to a newer, cloud-based version, which is now integrated with Financial Edge, a cloud-based financial software solution. The result is an easier system to keep maintained and updated, a more automated financial reporting system, and constituent records which are integrated with Renison's email system and can be updated with a touch of a button.

Renison's e-newsletters are now created and sent directly through its CRM system, and we can easily see who is engaging with and reading our newsletters and attending Renison events. This newly integrated system allows us to better communicate with the people who are important to Renison, and that improves our organizational infrastructure.
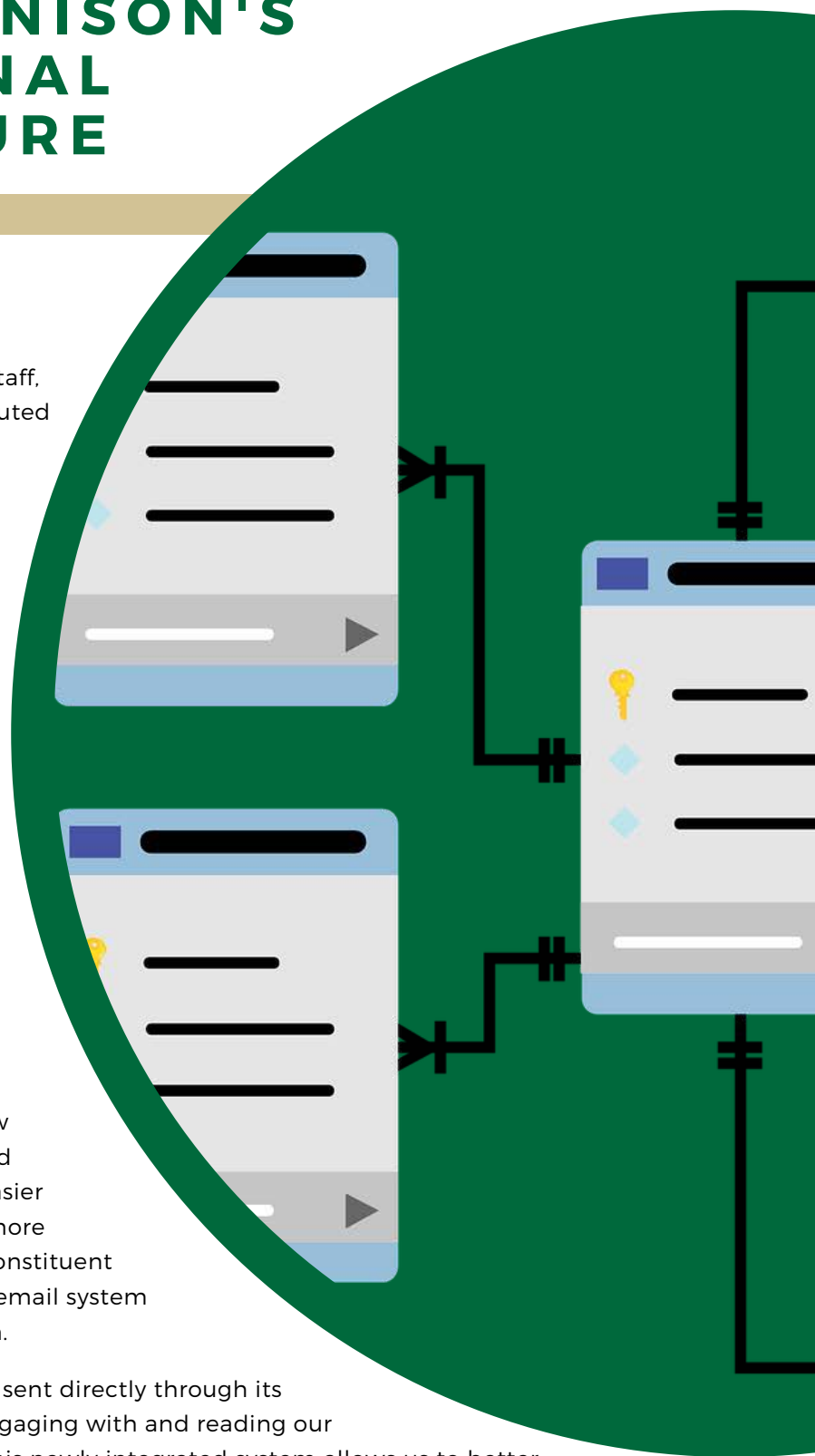
Finding solutions for student information.

WHAT'S DATA GOT TO DO WITH IT?

The management of data is no easy feat in any organization, but managing course registration, payment, and student information presents a unique challenge for database options. In the coming months, Renison will launch a new student information system to address some of the challenges faced by those responsible for recording and managing student information.

As an affiliated university college of the University of Waterloo, Renison degree students' information is managed centrally by the database system known as Quest. Students studying at Renison and not pursuing a UW degree, including most of those completing programming through the English Language Institute and Community and Professional Education, are not UW students and Renison must manage their information separately. Up to now, staff have been tracking information through a variety of means, including Excel spreadsheets and Webforms, with a lot of manual steps. As program capacity grew, it became clear that the manual processes in place were not sustainable, and the search for a suitable database system began.

Finding the right tool was a challenge; stakeholders from Renison met with several companies to explore their tools. Renison needed something dynamic that could be customized to work for a number of units. Now, Renison's IST team and those who manage student information are working to implement an appropriate software solution.

The biggest impact that will be seen is automation across multiple processes. From registration and payment to the printing of certificates, the tool will take away the manual aspect and make things more efficient. From a student perspective things shouldn't change much, but the impact on staff time will be significant. The new tool also gives lots of room for analysis and a detailed view of the student life cycle. The software may also have applications for the Student Experience and Housing and Marketing and Recruitment departments.

With a far-reaching scope and ability to streamline and automate previously manual processes, this new system will have a massive impact, and allow staff to spend their time and skills elsewhere. In other words, it will be game-changing.

KEEPING THINGS UP TO SPEED

Wi-fi is a luxury that, in recent years, has become so prolific that it's easy to take for granted. That is – unless it's not working. That's where the IST team comes in. Renison has a small but mighty Information Systems and Technology (IST) team who keeps the organization up to speed (pun intended) with things like wi-fi, AV equipment and generally all things technology-related.

Over the last couple of years, a project has been underway to upgrade wi-fi across Renison. Though the internet may be wireless, the infrastructure upgrade included the upgrading of most of the fiber optic cabling throughout Renison and replacement of network switches to provide speeds that supported wi-fi access points. Before this could even happen, though, the IST team started by looking at the design of the wi-fi network and adjusting based on feedback and usage. Previously, the design prioritized the coverage of wi-fi, but didn't consider capacity and the number of devices that people carry with them, which has increased over the last several years. IST says that the Great Hall, which had received a lot of negative feedback related to wi-fi previously, has had no related complaints so far this year.

The wi-fi project is only one way that the IST team keeps Renison infrastructure up to date. Every year the team looks at what needs to be upgraded or repaired based on a 5-year capital plan. This plan includes some regular maintenance or replacement (like something coming to the end of its lifespan) and adding things to the list according to need. Classroom upgrades are constant; now that the wi-fi has been upgraded, IST will be looking at the wired connections to see what needs attention.

IST already has its sights set on future plans, including the extension of wi-fi into outdoor spaces like the Renison courtyards. It's something that the University of Waterloo is starting to focus on, and Renison IST understands the need to keep up!

DONORS

To each of our many donors, thank you for your generous support of Renison University College

At Renison University College, faculty and students are helping to change the world! Supporters like you help to ensure that Renison continues its strong presence as a place of education and social change within our community, nationally, and internationally.

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