



# RENISON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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Annual Report  
2019/2020



AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

# A MESSAGE FROM BRIAN HENDLEY, BOARD CHAIR



Allow me to introduce myself as the Chair of the Board of Governors at Renison. More than 60 years of my life have involved universities. First as a student, with nine years of post-secondary education leading to a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Yale. That earned me my first job as an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the relatively new University of Waterloo (1966). That became my lifetime occupation at Waterloo with 39 years of teaching, research, and administration, including 8 years as Dean of Arts. Then, just prior to my retirement, I was appointed to the Board of Governors at Renison where I have stayed and which eventually led to my becoming Chair last year.

Throughout that long experience in the halls of academe I have seen budget highs and lows, student unrest and cooperation, faculty good times and bad times, staff hard work and job pressures. The players and scenarios have changed, but the underlying theme remains. Educating the minds and spirit of the young is crucial to the survival of democratic institutions. Our goal is to do our best to convey where we've come from historically, what we believe in, how we've learned from our mistakes, where we hope to be headed in the future. We want to instill in our students a sense of the need for social justice and environmental concern. We seek to promote a diverse and inclusive society.

We are indeed in all of this together. As you can see from this Annual Report, we continue to make adjustments and to ask more of our faculty and staff. It has not been easy. Wendy has shown strong leadership and the Board supports her efforts to deal with the obstacles created by the pandemic. Our residences and classrooms stand largely empty. Regretfully some staff have had to be laid off. Faculty and students have had to adjust to online learning. And yet, the spirit of Renison lives on. "One Sky Over All" remains our motto. While having to rely on the high tech innovations now in play during these COVID-19 times, such an education still needs to be a true meeting of minds, a personal communication from the old to the young that requires commitment and hard work from both sides. The fact that all the parties involved, faculty, staff, and students, are in this together gives me hope that Renison not only will remain intact, but will emerge stronger than ever. My lifelong experience with universities, coupled with the valiant leadership of Wendy, tells me that we shall overcome.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Hendley". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Dr. Brian Hendley, Chair, Board of Governors

# "AND SO WE PERSIST"

## RENISON RESILIENCE

Greetings all. In the months since our last AGM many changes have unfolded for Renison. Last November we gathered to celebrate our 60th Anniversary. What a memorable celebration it was!

As 2020 began, we turned to face the challenges and opportunities of the next 60 years. In less than a heartbeat, it was COVID-19 time. No aspect of life at Renison has been left unaffected by the tsunami which the pandemic has wrought for us. Degree and Community Education programs have all moved online. Our residence has been closed for the Fall term, at least. Many staff are on a temporary lay-off or participating in the Work-Sharing program. All staff, faculty, administrators, and Board members are framing and holding their Renison responsibilities in new ways. We have taken swift measures aimed at keeping the Renison boat in the water and moving forward, even as life looks nothing like it did one year ago. We are changed. And yet we remain constant. Never has the summons been stronger for Renison to work co-operatively in the spirit of our founders as we try to build our future: committed to our core values **sed coelum solum** while holding the Renison faculty, staff, student, alumni and Board community with Respect, Compassion and Equity. The Renison team remains in all things committed to creative and effective education for our learners.



As I daily participate with my colleagues in this endeavour, I am reminded of a children's story of which my daughters were particularly fond: **The Little Engine That Could**. That Little Engine was determined to push its train up a seemingly impossibly high mountain. Without its load, the people who waited at the top would perish. No one thought the Little Engine was strong enough; others, bigger and stronger, had failed in the attempt. But the Little Engine knew it must not fail; it could not fail because the world that waited at the top of the tracks could not survive if it did not succeed. So the Little Engine shut its eyes, imagined the job it needed to do, invited all the other cars to join it, and pushed with all its might. It did not give up and eventually saw the top of the mountain.

**Renison Resilience.** Different virtues are needed at different moments in history. In this moment, our resilience is what defines us. It is our resilience which will keep us moving forward toward the mountain top we have imagined together. We will not fail. Our small offering is needed in the world which is waiting. And so we persist- never turning back. Words could never adequately express the depth of my gratitude to all in the community who are sacrificing in so many different ways to realize this vision. There is nowhere else in the world, and no other time in which I would choose to be: together, here with you, on the way to the mountain top.

With Deep Respect and Appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Fletcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'W'.

Dr. Wendy L. Fletcher, President and Vice-Chancellor

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

In thousands of dollars

## Statement of Financial Position

Cash > 5,941  
 Investments > 2,546  
 Capital Assets > 32,934  
 Accounts payable & accrued liabilities > 525  
 Student deposits & fee advances > 650  
 Debt > 11,253  
 Employee future benefits obligation > 2,224

## Statement of Operations

Government grants > 5,337  
 Tuition > 12,420  
 Residence fees & Conferences > 2,784  
 Food Services > 1,008  
 Salaries, wages & benefits > 17,692  
 University services > 1,473  
 Contracted Services > 935  
 Utilities, repairs & maintenance > 534  
 Office, general & admin > 687  
 Academic support costs > 538

**Total Operating Budget = \$25 million**

# COURSE ENROLLMENTS



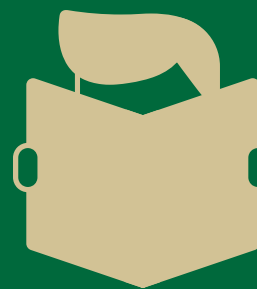
**6,108**

**SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND INNOVATION**  
 Social Development Studies and School of Social Work

**4,738**

**GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH LANGUAGES AND CULTURE**

Applied Language Studies, English for Multilingual Speakers, graduate and undergraduate, English, History, Religious Studies, East Asian Studies, and Studies in Islamic and Arab Cultures



**3,348**

**CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

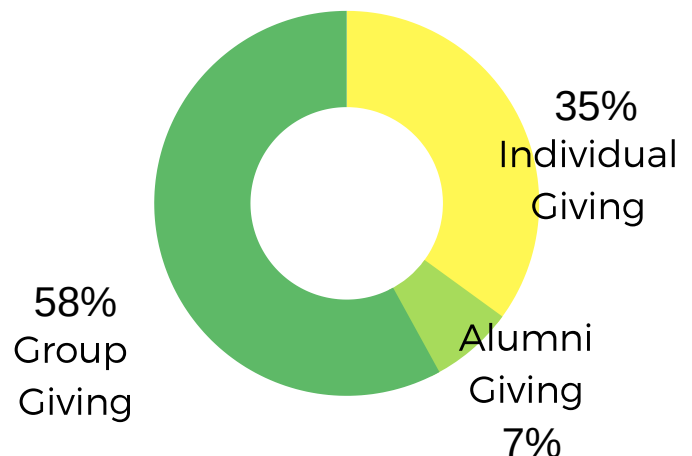
Renison Institute of Ministry, Sakura Japanese Language School, Renison International Office, non credit Chinese, Japanese and Korean language, English Language Institute, and Indigenous Studies.

# GIVING AT RENISON

May 1, 2019 - April 30, 2020

Cash and Pledges total = \$195,010

Total funds awarded = \$336,319



# RENISON'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

## GOAL 2 : FACULTY AND STAFF

Renison's Annual Report has traditionally followed a central theme. Last year, in 2019, Renison launched its five-year Strategic Plan, and we felt that framing the theme of our Annual Report around each of the five goals was a good way to showcase our work. After all, an organization's Strategic Plan sets out the road map that will lead it into the future. Like any road map, it is subject to changes due to traffic patterns, barriers and obstructions, and time-saving detours. To be effective, a Strategic Plan is descriptive, not prescriptive; it must have room to respond to changing realities and new routes to student success. Never has this proven more true than this past year.

2020 has been a year like no other. The global pandemic has required Renison, like all organizations, to respond to this public health crisis in a responsible and thoughtful way. Renison's Strategic Plan has been a helpful document as we transition to this new way of doing business; while the how may have changed, it continues to steer us towards what needs to be done.

Last year, we focussed on the first goal: Programs. This year, our theme is faculty and staff. Within these pages, you will read many accounts of how Renison

values its faculty and staff and attempts to contribute to their wellbeing. Most telling of all, perhaps, is how Renison has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Within hours of the province declaring a pandemic, Renison made the decision to move all faculty and staff to a work-from home protocol; the only exception were those staff members providing services essential to our students in residence, and the continued safe operation of the facility. The safety and wellbeing of our students, staff and faculty remain foundational to our decision-making process. The pages that follow provide a brief overview of progress towards Goal 2: faculty and staff.



Cort Egan, Director  
External Relations & Communications

Renison's Strategic Plan can be found here:  
<https://uwaterloo.ca/renison/strategic-plan-2019-2024>



# REVIEW OF EVERY STAFF POSITION ENSURES EQUITABLE COMPENSATION

*2.1: Clarify, and where needed, redefine workloads and compensation.*

Renison strives to ensure that jobs are evaluated equitably and employees are paid appropriately. To this end, Renison began a project to review compensation across the organization. The final phase, which began in 2019, focused on the evaluation of ongoing staff positions and the design of an updated performance review process.

The first step was to collect all relevant, current job information for every role in the organization. To do this, every ongoing employee of Renison was asked to complete a Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) in consultation with their manager. Completed PDQs were then reviewed by the Senior Administrative Vice Presidents, and the finalized documents were passed to the Job Evaluation Committee for the purpose of overall evaluation.

The committee included representatives from a wide variety of areas throughout the organization and together, using the Korn Ferry Hay Guide Chart-Profile Method, they evaluated the staff positions within Renison. The Korn Ferry Hay Guide Chart-Profile Method uses 4 standard factors (with 12 dimensions) to evaluate the skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions inherent in any job. Consultants from Korn Ferry evaluated top management roles and the committee, with Korn Ferry's guidance, evaluated the remainder of the roles.

A total of 73 jobs were evaluated and placed into a newly created salary structure. Korn Ferry assisted in doing careful market analysis to reflect the Ontario Public Sector market and Renison's salary structure was created using the 50th percentile of that market. This is in keeping with the University of Waterloo's compensation philosophy, and will make Renison highly competitive in the marketplace. Salary corrections were made as necessary in January 2020 with Board approval.

Renison continues its work with Korn Ferry to develop a corresponding Performance Evaluation Program that will more directly link job performance to compensation. This approach is in keeping with industry standards and has proven to be motivating and meaningful to employees. A hybrid model will be introduced for the 2020 evaluation year, with full implementation slated for 2021.

# RENISON MOVES SWIFTLY TO MANAGE WELLBEING OF STAFF AND FACULTY DURING THE PANDEMIC

*2.3 : Nurture high functioning workforce, including expanded opportunities for professional development and recognition for all staff.*

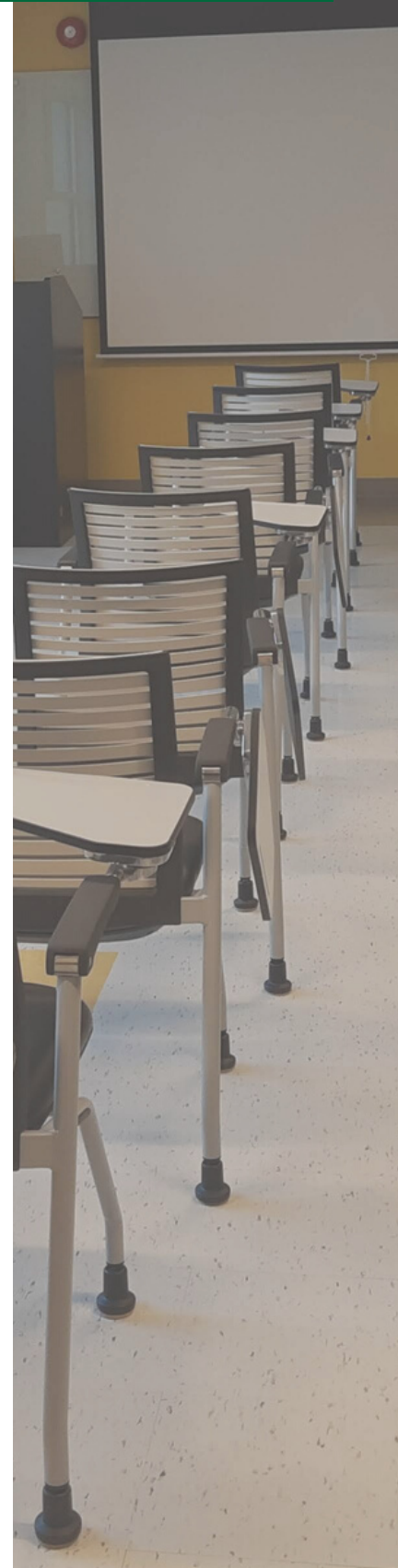
The COVID-19 global pandemic has affected all aspects of our world, and created a new normal in which Renison has had to adapt. Though the organization has had to make difficult decisions, including temporary layoffs and the reduction of hours, support for employees to do their best work has been maintained.

In the days after COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic Renison, along with the University of Waterloo, quickly transitioned to an online delivery model for all courses, and instructed all employees to work from home if possible. In the early days, this meant relying on the Information Services and Technology (IST) team to ensure everyone had the equipment they needed, and were trained for new online tools being used across all areas of the college. A college-wide online team was created in Microsoft Teams, where various how-to documents and resources were made available.

In the months following the move to online work, the financial impact of the pandemic came into sharper focus. A decline in revenue meant it was necessary to manage the cost of staffing as part of larger expense management. Working with the Human Resources department, some staff members were temporarily laid off, and many began working reduced hours, supplemented by a Federal Government program called “Work Share.” Employees of Renison were kept informed with regular communication from the Managing Directors Group (MDG) and through Town Hall meetings where attendees were kept up to date, notified of next steps, and invited to ask questions.

The pandemic has put into place creative programming designed to keep the community of Renison connected. Coffee chats, Mindful Mondays, and Trivia have each provided a space for colleagues to maintain positive relationships. The Wellness Committee and Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) have also been finding ways to ensure that the health and safety (both physical and mental) of the Renison community is front of mind.

Each area of Renison has demonstrated resilience and innovation as the organization continues to move through this unprecedented time in history. Though this is ongoing, the strategic goal of “nurturing a high-functioning workforce” has been made all the more important as the work of Renison continues.



# RENISON SUPPORTS FACULTY RESEARCH WITH PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

*2.4: Expand opportunities for support of faculty research and the communication of the research activities in our various constituencies.*

In the Fall of 2019, Renison began a partnership with the Waterloo Public Library (WPL) to present regular lectures where faculty of Renison could present their research. The public lectures were designed to increase visibility for faculty research, open up meaningful dialogue, and introduce Renison to a broader community.

The series began as an in-person offering at the WPL main branch. The first session was hosted by Kelly Laurila and focused on engagement with Reconciliation in Canada, followed by a lecture from Doug Cowan on religious iconography in the work of Stephen King. Both were attended by engaged audience members who demonstrated their enthusiasm with questions and comments throughout.

In March of 2020, a couple of weeks before the third lecture, the global COVID-19 pandemic forced a delay in the series. The series moved online, and continued with Rob Case's discussion of water activism and Susan Cadell's examination of memorial tattoos. One of the benefits of moving the series online was that location was no longer a factor for participation, and many more people were able to attend. These two sessions completed the originally planned series, but it was clear that there was appetite for this kind of educational series, both in person and online.



Image: Kelly Laurila explores Reconciliation in Canada in January 21, 2020 at the Waterloo Public Library's Main Branch.





Above: The panelists gather for the Anti-Racism Roundtable on September 1, 2020, held online. Clockwise, from top left: Dr. Kofi Campbell, Dr. Jasmin Zine, Dr. Jean Becker, The Honourable Bardish Chagger, MP, and Dr. Malinda Smith.

To reflect Renison’s motto, the series was rebranded as the One Sky Over All Community Speaker Series, a continuing partnership with the WPL. So far, the series has included: a discussion of women-led activism and its challenges during COVID-19 in Arab and Latin American cultures, hosted by Amir Al-Azraki; an Anti-Racism roundtable focused on exploding the barriers to equity and decolonization within our organizations, hosted by Kofi Campbell; and an introduction to the Getaway Families Program, which increases connections between International students and local communities, hosted by Christine Gillies and Bethany Dixon. As with previous sessions, there was engaged participation, in particular during the Anti-Racism roundtable, which had almost 500 registrants. Upcoming is a session about sex in the genre of horror, a panel discussion about the relationship between sexuality and gender identity, and religion, and a look at the effect of online bullying.

With each lecture, more of our community become connected to Renison and its work, increasing the reach of faculty research and promoting lifelong learning and positive dialogue among our local community.

# DONORS

Thank you to our many donors 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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