

Trent, Fleming have a history of partnership in Peterborough

By Peterborough Examiner

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A hundred years of partnership – well, you might say that. Both Trent and Fleming have recently celebrated fiftieth anniversaries. On both sides, that includes fifty years of partnership (and fifty twice takes us to one hundred). Today, our partnerships set an impressive example at a time when Ontario is grappling with the relationship between universities and colleges.

There was a time when no one questioned the difference between universities and colleges. Universities represented intellectual and research traditions rooted in the middle ages. Colleges were designed to provide hands-on skills that equipped students with immediate employment that met the needs of local communities.

But this distinction has never withstood a close look. Universities have always been a place for professional education and preparation for employment. Colleges have always included study and research that is broader than specific job training. Theory and practice are at their best when they inform each other.

Today colleges are expanding their research and general programming at the same time that universities place more emphasis on professional programs, job skills and experiential learning. At Trent and Fleming, these synergies are highlighted in new Strategic Mandate Agreements with the provincial government.

For many years, Trent and Fleming have worked to develop and expand distinctive diploma/degree pathways for students. They include collaborations in healthcare, business, the arts, sustainability and the environment. One of the best examples of a university/college partnership in the province is the Trent/Fleming School of Nursing, highly acclaimed both for the quality of its programs and the positive relations between its two supporting institutions.

Recently, governments have challenged us to positively impact our local regions by sparking innovative thinking, creating employment opportunities and supporting marginalized communities. In the agreements we have negotiated, Trent and Fleming have made a commitment to work together to do exactly this, in Peterborough and beyond.

Broad access to postsecondary education is a point of pride for both our institutions. We

aim to be communities that welcome and support Aboriginal students, faculty and staff; first-generation postsecondary students; women; members of the LGBTQ community; students from remote and rural areas; and international students.

As the world seeks solutions to water resource issues, Trent's Institute for Watershed Science has partnered with Fleming's Centre for Alternative Wastewater Treatment to develop strategies for source water protection and municipal wastewater management in remote communities in Canada's north.

Fleming and the City of Peterborough are also key partners in the development of Trent's 85-acre Research and Innovation Park. The park will promote our shared interest in clean technology and green, sustainable industry. The same interest motivated our support for the successful United Nations

(UNESCO) application resulting in the designation of Peterborough-Kawartha-Haliburton as a Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development (one of only 150 RCEs in the world).

To enhance entrepreneurship for students and the broader community we have launched FastStart, a partnership that provides resources, research capability, incubation and mentoring for small and medium-sized enterprises, young entrepreneurs, and startup companies.

Linkages between Trent and Fleming have been a key factor driving our success and that of our communities. One sign of that success is enrolment growth that leads the province at a time when demographics are decreasing for the number of students available.

As providers of education, Fleming and Trent touch virtually every business and organization in the region through alumni, employees, students, research, applied projects and other outreach initiatives. We aim for an exemplary model of postsecondary education that can drive economic growth, build vibrant communities, prepare students for the future and enhance quality of life in Peterborough and the Kawarthas.

Leo Groarke is the President and Vice-Chancellor of Trent University and Tony Tilly is President of Fleming College.