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University's partnership with Conexus moving to next phase

Wascana Centre Authority (WCA) announced today that it has given the green light to the University of Regina and Conexus Credit Union to move into a design phase for the new building proposed at the University's College Avenue campus (CAC).

"We are excited to have such a community-oriented partner in Conexus to help us renew the College Avenue campus for the thousands of children, adults and seniors who benefit from its programming each year," said Dr. Vianne Timmons, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Regina. "Today's announcement is another step toward delivering on our promise to revitalize our historic campus by enhancing educational programming, preserving heritage properties, and promoting arts and culture."

The University-Conexus partnership will contribute up to \$8.25 million to the renewal of CAC and millions more in avoided cost for the rejuvenation of Darke Hall. The Conexus partnership proposal includes a new head office for Conexus immediately west of Darke Hall and east of Wascana Drive, a business incubator site to support entrepreneurship among small businesses, and accessibility upgrades for Darke Hall.

"We're proud to contribute to the College Avenue Campus Renewal Project, joining the University of Regina and its many partners to enhance the park by saving and restoring this heritage campus," says Eric Dillon, chief executive officer of Conexus Credit Union. "As we move into a design phase for the project, we will be working to create an innovative educational and cultural hub as well as a new workplace for many of our Regina-based corporate services employees."

Extensive details about the CAC Renewal Project, the Conexus partnership and the consultations are available at: www.uregina.ca/external/donor-relations/priorities1/cac.html.

Conexus is committed to adhering to the WCA Master Plan throughout this process. During the design phase, the University and Conexus will work collaboratively with WCA on the building and landscape design, ensuring that all of WCA's architectural, engineering and heritage processes are followed.

The public notice about WCA's approval to move to the design stage is available at: <http://wascana.sk.ca/>.

College Avenue Campus Renewal Project

The construction phase of the CAC Renewal Project began in September 2016. It is a \$60 million project that includes a \$27.6 million contribution from the Government of Canada's Strategic Investment Fund and involves renovations to the College Building, Tower Building and the Conservatory façade.

Prior to that, the University initiated construction activities on other components of the CAC Renewal Project. On September 8, 2015, the University announced the allocation of \$3 million from donations to repair the exterior shell of Darke Hall. Work related to this investment is ongoing.

The CAC includes the Centre for Continuing Education, Conservatory of Performing Arts, and the Lifelong Learning Centre. Each year it serves approximately 8,000 learners between six months and nearly 100 years of age and hosts dozens of community and cultural events. Upon completion of the Renewal Project, the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy will return to College Avenue and deliver on a proposal to establish the Canadian Institute for Science and Innovation Policy.

Conexus Credit Union

Committed to both CAC renewal and to enhancing Wascana Centre, Conexus Credit Union has a demonstrated 80-year history of social responsibility and community investment in Saskatchewan. With 120,000 members and a responsibility for \$7.14 billion in funds, Conexus is a strong and growing company whose structure as a member-based cooperative actively shapes its values and commitment to giving back to the community.

BACKGROUND

Announced in 2011, the College Avenue Campus Renewal Project is the University's priority capital fundraising project. It is aimed at restoring and preserving the historic CAC, enabling it to continue as an economic, educational and cultural hub for the city of Regina.

To advance the project, the University took an innovative approach. On January 12, 2016, the University issued a public request for proposals (RFP), seeking development partners able to support the CAC Renewal Project. The University's campus master planning consultations, conducted jointly with Wascana Centre Authority, identified several parcels of land adjacent to CAC facilities for potential future development. The RFP sought proposals for land development, provided a partner could meet established criteria. Additionally, the University stipulated that development would be subject to public consultation and pending transfer of land by the City of Regina.

On June 8, 2016, as a result of the RFP process, the University announced a proposed new partnership with Conexus Credit Union. The partnership plans to:

- Centralize 200 Conexus employees currently located at six different locations across Regina at a new building immediately adjacent to the west of Darke Hall;
- Support restoration of existing heritage buildings by seamlessly integrating new construction with existing heritage spaces to develop a facility compatible with the surrounding area, buildings and landscape;
- Help save Darke Hall by breathing new life into the performance venue, providing an atrium and additional space for theatre groups, the Conservatory of Performing Arts, music festivals and many other cultural activities and special events;
- Improve accessibility to Darke Hall by providing accessible entrances through the proposed atrium, helping the facility meet all current accessibility standards;
- Help integrate state-of-the-art IT connectivity that supports the University's intent to modernize the historic campus for contemporary functional use; and
- Provide space and support for a business incubator, making staff available as mentors or guest lecturers, and offering Conexus as a working lab for student research.

Consultations on this proposal were conducted in June 2016, including two open forums, advertisements in the *Leader-Post*, 25,000 emails to alumni, faculty, staff and community members, and many targeted meetings with heritage, culture and arts groups.

Following public consultations, the University and Conexus presented the case for transfer of City land in support of the CAC Renewal Project to the City's Finance and Administration Committee on August 2, 2016. The Committee voted to refer the final decision to City Council.

On August 19, the Government of Canada allocated \$27.6 million of the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund to support renovations to the heritage buildings.

On August 29, City Council approved the donation of 2.6 acres of land to the CAC Renewal Project, enabling the University and Conexus to proceed with the partnership, pending further approvals from Wascana Centre Authority.

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