

Opening Remarks by the Chair, Prof. Carolyn Tuohy

Thank you very much, Frank. And let me add my words of welcome to everyone here today. We are really gratified by the interest in this conference. It exceeded even our own expectations and we do welcome you all. I think it is a tribute to the importance of the issues that we're dealing with as the president has said. The "Rae" review, as we are now calling it, has put on our agenda the central public policy issues in post-secondary education: the accessibility of the system; the quality of the system; the level of funding that is required and the balance across sources of funding; issues of system design and governance; issues of accountability. These are the central public policy issues facing our sector and they certainly extend well beyond Ontario in their relevance.

There have been a number of events, forums, and debates triggered by the Rae review. I think that's extremely healthy in this province and in this country. The Rae review itself has organized a series of round tables and town halls. We here at the University of Toronto have had our own town halls on each of the three campuses.

This is a different event. This is the academy, essentially, recognizing its responsibility to take these issues seriously and address them in a serious scholarly way. The concrete goal of this conference is a book that will compile all of the presentations that we will hear over the next two days, as well as, as much of the discussant's comments as we can capture. We hope that that book will (uncharacteristically for an academic publication) be available very shortly after the conference. The target release date is Jan. 14, believe it or not, from the University of Toronto Press.

In the meantime, we will be publishing the papers on our website in about two weeks. I would ask any of the presenters who have not already done so, if they would please sign the consent form. The organizers tell me I must make this plea and issue this reminder so please do sign the consent form to make your papers available on the website.

It is something of an irony, I think, of the academy – and I say this as a student of comparative public policy -- that we perhaps not given as much attention as we should, as a set of scholars, to the issues facing our own sector. I must say, however, that the presenters this morning and for the rest of the next couple of days are wonderful exceptions to that rule. They have given serious thought to these issues and we can very much learn from them.

We have been quite ambitious in the number of presentations that we have scheduled, as you can see from the panel in front of you this morning, and so the Chairs are going to have be quite Draconian. We also have a time-keeper, who will be ringing the bell to remind people that their time is up (sound of bell ringing) -- there it is. So, we look forward to hearing from our presenters this morning and throughout this conference. Thank you very much for coming.