

Ron Chatterson  
1022 Ave. H. North  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
S7L 2C6

August 3, 2011

Re: Letter of Endorsement for University of  
Saskatchewan Pisim Project

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a retired teacher and was the teacher/supervisor of the Pisim project. When offered the opportunity to make a presentation to the Outreach Department of the College of Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, I had been teaching for 32 years, the last 11 for Northern Lights School Division where I had been hired to promote the Trades by teaching classes relating to them.

First I took the idea of a project to my grade nine class. They came up with the house concept very quickly, researched the history and defined the project. The Administration and I presented it to the Outreach Department. Once it was accepted, I supervised the project until it was over.

Because Cumberland House is a remote community, the role of the University was immensely more complicated. They had to take students who knew nothing about the world of engineering and give them enough exposure and knowledge to design and build the dream home for their northern community. The process involved many steps. We toured the University, particularly the College of Engineering and we toured work sites where the engineers explained what was happening and why. Engineers visited our school several times, each time bringing different presentations and projects relating to the completion of the final design. They found several Saskatoon and area community members with expertise relating to our project and either brought these people to Cumberland or arranged for us to visit them on site. The University worked very hard trying to include these students in university related activities such as science camps and tours.

They put together the team of experts we needed to finish the design, then the experts, in several very diverse fields, that we needed to do the build and they saw to it that we had access to these people.

The outcomes of this project far exceeded our expectations. Several of our students will register at the U of S this fall. This will mark the first time in many years that a student from Cumberland has left right after graduation to attend the U of S. The house project caused a big stir in our community and in several others as well. The community took great pride in our efforts and paid great attention to the way it was built and how it would be a much better home than any other on the island. The community, tradespeople included, watched carefully to learn how to build better, more environmentally friendly buildings which would operate in a more affordable way than their predecessors. The community pride received a huge boost. Cumberland was again on the map! And our children can do anything. The school and the community are now part of a much larger world and that will go on for years.

The benefits to the students were the most important to me. A small group of northern students were able to enter a world unknown to them. The experience opened doors most would never have dreamed they could approach. The academically gifted saw university up close and personal and those interested in the trades had the opportunity to work closely with some of the best in Saskatchewan. The tradespeople who came, liked what they saw and left with a great respect for those they met.

The project was a huge success. The U of S is a part of Cumberland House as are the engineers and other specialists that they brought to us. Before it was a foreign world, unknown and fearful. The students won, they got to travel to new worlds. The community won, they had a new world come to show them a better way. The university won and will continue to win new students from that world. I won, I got to work closely with people who could teach me new things. The whole team won, we won the APEGS (Association of Professional Engineers and Geophysicists of Saskatchewan) Environmental Excellence Award for 2011.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Chatterson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Ron Chatterson