

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

October 2025

USASK LAUNCHES TWO FIRST-IN-SASKATCHEWAN REHABILITATION SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Two new programs have been launched in the School of Rehabilitation Science in the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine. Learners can now apply to be part of the province's first occupational therapy and speech-language pathology training programs. USask plays a vital role in educating the health-care professionals needed by the people of Saskatchewan. This new programming reflects our commitment to advancing health education to address the evolving challenges faced by communities throughout the province. The Government of Saskatchewan committed approximately \$17.8 million to develop the Master of Occupational Therapy and the Master of Speech-Language Pathology programs.

The School of Rehabilitation Science will be the first in Canada to have occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and physical therapy programs housed together with harmonized programs. Twelve faculty members, including inaugural program chairs, have been recruited to lead curriculum development and initiate research programs this fall.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION FORUM REFLECTS ON THE PAST DECADE

Ten years ago, USask hosted Building Reconciliation: Universities Answering the TRC's Calls to Action, a first-of-its-kind national forum.

In 2017, we launched the Internal Truth and Reconciliation Forum to provide an opportunity for students, staff, and faculty to come together, reflect, and move forward in advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Later gifted the name māmowī āsohtētān ("Let's Cross this Together"), the forum has continued annually as an open gathering for the entire USask community, with this year's event held on Sept. 26. This year's forum aligned with the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, focusing on the role USask plays in the revitalization of Indigenous languages in Saskatchewan and Canada. Knowledge and language keeper Dr. Kevin wâsakâyâsiw Lewis (ipkDoc), assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies in the College of Education, shared his expertise and experience at the forum, championing immersion school and culture camps as having a critical role in language revitalization.

Thank you to everyone who takes part in these annual forums and engages in this critical work.

WCVM CELEBRATES OPENING OF VITAL ANIMAL HEALTH CARE TOOLS

USask's Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) is celebrating the opening of a new magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine and a linear accelerator—part of a vital animal health care and education project that wouldn't have been possible without significant support from donors. Western Canadian animal owners and referring veterinarians now have access to a 3 Tesla MRI unit that produces highly detailed images for diagnosing animal patients and developing treatment plans. The new linear accelerator, a vital tool for treating pets with cancer, optimizes image-guided radiotherapy and provides high-speed radiation treatment.

The new MRI machine and linear accelerator will modernize animal health in Saskatchewan and beyond and help provide our students with the education and training needed to become the veterinarians of the future.

USASK HUSKIES CELEBRATE 2024-25 ACADEMIC ALL-CANADIANS

On Oct. 8, 124 USask student-athletes were named Academic All-Canadians for the 2024-25 season after achieving an average of 80% or higher. Out of 450 student-athletes who competed at the Canada West or U SPORTS level during the 2024-25 season, 124 were able to reach the 80% plateau, or higher, in their academic pursuits. As a result, Huskie varsity athletes have successfully maintained an impressive ratio of 1-in-3.5 earning the title of Academic All-Canadian. Congratulations to our successful student-athletes on this accomplishment.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

People Around the World (PAW) international congress

Now in its seventh year, USask's People Around the World (PAW) international congress will bring together community members, researchers, industry partners and students for data-driven discussions about global challenges. This year's theme, *Healthy people, healthy planet: driving innovation with data*, highlights creative collaboration, data-informed decision making, and accessible solutions for a healthier world. The 2025 PAW Congress runs October 22-24 and features well-known Canadian health and policy experts who will come together to discuss topics ranging from artificial intelligence for health, to air quality and the importance of healthy communities. [Learn more about the PAW congress and register to attend here.](#)

USask researchers receive \$1.5 million for rapid response wildfire research

Each year, wildfires present significant challenges for Canadian communities, forcing individuals from their homes, impacting their livelihoods and posing a risk to their health. For First Nations and Métis communities the damage from wildfires has been experienced year after year and has left lasting impacts. Researchers from the nātawihowin First Nations Research Network/mamawiikikayaahk Métis Research Network (SK-NEIHR) and USask are leading a community-focused research initiative that examines the impacts of

wildfire evacuations on Indigenous communities. The National Coordinating Centre of the Network Environments of Indigenous Health Research recently received a \$1.5 million investment from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Institute of Indigenous Peoples Health to begin this rapid response research. This grant will help Dr. Bobby Henry (PhD), associate professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies in the College of Arts and Science and USask's Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Justice and Wellbeing, and his team work with First Nations and Métis communities to develop research projects that evaluate the impacts of wildfires, evacuations, and develop rapid research approaches to address future disasters, emergencies and pandemics.

USask researchers publish first Canadian guidelines for Spinal Bulbar Muscular Atrophy

USask researchers have published the first Canadian clinical guidelines for Spinal Bulbar Muscular Atrophy (SBMA), a rare hereditary neuromuscular disorder. The guidelines, titled *Best Practice Recommendations for the Clinical Care of Spinal Bulbar Muscular Atrophy*, were published on September 22 in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Led by Dr. Kerri Schellenberg (MD), associate professor, neurology, in the Department of Medicine, the project represents a landmark in improving care for SBMA patients across Canada. Until now, the only existing guidelines for SBMA were published in France and did not address symptoms for female carriers or cultural responsiveness which is a need in Canada. The new Canadian guidelines address these gaps and offer additional recommendations for the multidisciplinary nature of the disease including managing cardiac, endocrine, sensory and speech-related complications.

USask scholars receive prestigious Fulbright Canada research placements

Two USask researchers have received special positions from Fulbright Canada, an organization dedicated to fostering academic connections between Canada and the United States. Designed to create "exchange opportunities for exceptional students, scholars and researchers in the two countries", these opportunities allow USask scholars to shine on an international stage and exchange important knowledge for future research. Dr. Clinton Westman (PhD), a professor in the Department of Anthropology in the College of Arts and Science, was recently named a Fulbright Canada Special Foundation Fellow.

Westman's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council-funded research focuses on natural resource development and its impact on Indigenous communities. Dr. Matthew Neufeld (PhD), a professor in the Department of History in the College of Arts and Science, will also be travelling to a prestigious university in the United States to pursue his research into military history. Dr. Neufeld holds the Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Humanities and Social Sciences.

USask researcher honoured with top pulse crop award

USask) researcher Dr. Tom Warkentin (PhD) has been awarded the Canadian Pulse and Special Crops Trade Association Industry Appreciation Award for his significant contribution to Canada's pulse and special crops industry. The award is presented annually to an individual, company or organization that has made significant contribution to Canada's pulse and special crops industry. Dr. Warkentin is a renowned plant breeder at the Crop Development Centre within the USask's College of Agriculture and Bioresources and leads the Field Pea and Soybean Crop Breeding and Genetics program as the Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Research Program Chair. His research is centered on developing high-performing pea and soybean cultivars tailored for Western Canada and northern U.S. regions.