Hello Council members. Bonjour. tânsi. hau koda. Ṝōďńië’tę? hau kola. taanishi. hau kona. anin

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my first report to the University of Saskatchewan Council.

GENERAL REMARKS
The commitment, courage, hope, and drive of faculty, staff, students, senior administration, and university elders have been so apparent during my first 1.5 months in the role of Provost and Vice-President Academic. I am very grateful for the warm welcome from President Stoicheff and colleagues, and for collegiality everywhere, as I come to know the university. I am excited to have the honour to serve the University of Saskatchewan’s mission, vision, and aspirations; and our president’s own vision for our university. At a time when all universities are experiencing the headwinds of change, USask is redefining what it means to be a world-class university – for Saskatchewan and from Saskatchewan. I very much look forward to working with the Council and entire USask community in this vital effort.

In the first month my focus has been on connecting, learning and listening, to inform the university’s development of an academic agenda that is responsive to the university’s financial realities, in order to give an outstanding experience at USask. Formal and informal contact has included Chancellor, Board of Governors, President, Vice Presidents and their teams, Provost’s Executive, Deans and Executive Directors, Department Heads, College Councils, Pandemic Response Team, Post-Pandemic Shift Project team, University Council Chair, Chairs of Council Committees meeting, Planning and Priorities Committee of Council, Elders, Special Advisor to the President for Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression, ARAO committee on academic credentials, Research Centre Directors, USFA, faculty, staff, students, USSU Executive and Council, GSA Executive, USask custodial staff, Ministry of Advanced Education, and Provosts of University of Regina and Saskatchewan Polytechnic. I look forward to visiting every College/School Council during 2021.

Projects that are continuing, commenced (*), and completed (+) in the past six weeks include:
- Performance Framework (see further information below) +
- 2020/21, 2021/22 budgets and resource allocation
- Tuition planning and consultation: Including open Q/A sessions with GSA Executive (23 Feb) and USSU Council (25 Feb), and meetings with the GSA Executive (8 March, 15 March)
- Transition to campus (Fall/Winter terms): Thank you to the PRT for their outstanding leadership
- TABBS refresh*: A number of areas in TABBS have been identified for proposed revision in 2021. These include the ‘active researcher’ designation. 94 percent of faculty are currently identified as active researcher. We are in project initiation phase, and will complete the project during this calendar year, in time for FY2022/23 resource allocation. As the project develops, advice will be sought from Council and its committees.
- Financial sustainability (Academic): Scoping project *
Supplemental Support Centre Activities and Resource Allocation *

Undergraduate and Graduate courses and programs are making their way to and through Council Committees, including the Master of Music (M.Mus) which comes today to Council. The development of micro-credentials is also underway. Thank you to Council members, Departments/Schools/Colleges and University Governance for the positive effort towards shortening the approval process while retaining academic quality.

Events attended in this reporting period include: People Around the World (PAW) Conference (led by USask International); and the USask Indigenous Student Achievement Awards, to honour USask Indigenous students for their academic excellence, leadership, research, community engagement and resiliency. The award ceremony was part of Indigenous Achievement Week (IAW), which celebrated the successes and contributions of Métis, First Nations and Inuit students, staff and faculty within the context of this year’s theme: nikānih itohtētān, walking together into the future. In addition, I participated in the anti-racism/anti-oppression training which began at the end of February for the President’s Executive. On International Women’s Day I hosted a virtual USask gathering of women leaders. About 60 per cent of the leadership roles reporting to the provost are women. My participation continues as an advisor to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation in preparation for the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit; and I have contributed to an edited forthcoming book on international security studies, entitled: Risks, Identity and Conflict: Theoretical Perspectives and Case Studies. I look forward to contributing to teaching/supervision.

Accreditation granted:
- Master of Public Health. Congratulations to the School of Public Health. Thank-you to Dr Doug Brothwell (Dean, College of Dentistry) who as former Interim Executive Director SPH led the school’s team through their successful accreditation process.

Appointments:
- Dr Melissa Just, Interim Deputy Provost
- Dr George Mutwiri, Interim Executive Director, School of Public Health

Searches commencing/in-progress:
- Dean of Nursing
- Dean of Western College of Veterinary Medicine
- Executive Director School of Environment and Sustainability
- Deputy Provost. In the past three years there has been recognition of the growing complexity of the university and associated need for a deputy provost role. Through the interim deputy provost appointment, the need and benefits for the university of having this capacity and capability has been confirmed. The search will be internal to USask during 2021, to tap into existing institutional knowledge and networks, and to provide a leadership opportunity for our university community. Affordability has been considered carefully and will be managed through several approaches: (a) internal search; (b) a vacated position in the provost’s office remaining unfilled; (c) work reassignment in the provost’s office; and (d) further strengthened financial controls. In 2010/11 the provost’s office comprised 24FTE (Administration). In this current fiscal year (2020/21) the office comprises 5.9 FTE (Administration). This will be reduced further during FY 2021/22. The provost’s office has the smallest Administration complement of all units reported at USask.

External appointment/resignation
- Associate Provost (Institutional Planning and Assessment), Dr Dena McMartin has been appointed to the role of Vice President Research at the University of Lethbridge. Dr McMartin’s contributions have been significant in service to our university and she is a truly valued colleague. We wish Dr McMartin well in her new leadership role.
COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Last week our president wrote to our university to thank all members for perseverance, vision and collegiality over the past year in which we have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Across Canada and the world we have seen the COVID-19 pandemic impact higher education institutions and their communities. Thank you for all that the Council, academic colleagues, staff, student leaders and staff at the University of Saskatchewan have provided for one another and our community over this year. There was and still is no guidebook for what we are going through as a sector and university. USask has been creative, collaborative, and caring in making a way forward. During this crisis, there has been adaptation, working long hours, creating virtual and real solutions, resilience and compassion. This is a time in which our most human abilities, most needed expertise and research, and most fundamental values have been elevated.

Thank you to your friends, families, partners, children (and pets) who have stood by you as the focus has so often been on supporting others, and leading others across our university. We are grateful for the gift of time that could have been with friends and families instead. Thank you to every member of this wider family of the University of Saskatchewan. For all those who have known sadness and loss, we pause, offering our best thoughts, and we continue to show compassion for one another and to help each other through challenging times.

Thank you to each member of the Pandemic Response and Recovery Team for the planning and coordination of procedures and protocols that are seeing us safely through this pandemic. Your commitment to the principles of the PRT have remained steadfast, and a model to us all. Thank you.

Our University Plan includes four principles gifted to the University: Sustainability, Creativity, Diversity and Connectivity.

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The principle of connectivity has been gifted with guiding words that resonate one year on - a time now for remembering and for looking ahead with a unique strength and understanding that comes from a year that has been shaped by courage, kindness, and hope:

"Our connectivity is our source of resilience, and the interactions that bring us closer together are energized by wonder and a playful spirit. Together, we have the flexibility to flourish in the face of change—and the confidence to take our place among leaders, emboldened by the unity of the community we carry with us."

In this spirit of connection, and with genuine respect for all that has been made possible through your actions of leadership, service and kindness, I join with our President Stoicheff to say, thank you.

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK PROJECT UPDATE

In early 2020, the Ministry of Advanced Education (MAE) initiated a project to develop a Saskatchewan post-secondary education performance framework based on five expectations of the sector (accessible, responsive, high quality, sustainable, and accountable). The project involves identifying performance indicators at the sector level and for each institution with the goal of supporting increased information and reporting on oversight, compliance, and outcomes for the sector. Although the project was initiated early in 2020, it was put on hold for most of this year due to the pandemic situation and other government priorities. The first phase was restarted
with provincial post-secondary institutions in December with a focus on developing a set of sector-wide and individual institutional measures associated with sector expectations.

On February 26, 2021, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) submitted 16 indicators to the MAE for consideration and further analysis. The indicators were identified through the leadership of the President’s Executive Committee (PEC) and feedback from deans, executive directors, and other senior leaders between December 2020 and February 2021. With this, each indicator was evaluated to determine how it aligns to the five aspirations of the University of Saskatchewan’s strategic plan and to the 10 priority areas of the Government of Saskatchewan’s Growth Plan. The performance framework is currently a planning and reporting tool that enables USask to profile its areas of strength and sector differentiation and has no government funding attached to it. Additional updates will be provided to University Council as the project continues to unfold.

Thank you to former Interim Provost Dr. Melissa Just for initiating this project and to Institutional Planning and Assessment (lead: Dr. Dena McMartin) for stewardship of the development of the indicators.

**COLLEGE AND SCHOOL UPDATES**

**College of Medicine**
The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has elected USask alumnus Dr. Alika Lafontaine (MD’06) as CMA president in 2022-23. Lafontaine will serve as president-elect until August 2022, when he will become president. Lafontaine is an award-winning physician who practices anesthesia in Grande Prairie, AB. He was born and raised in Treaty 4 Territory and has Anishinaabe, Cree, Métis, and Pacific Islander ancestry. Congratulations, Dr. Lafontaine! [More information](#)

**College of Education**
**26th Annual National Congress on Rural Education in Canada**
The college’s Department of Educational Administration and Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit (SELU) are hosting the 26th Annual National Congress on Rural Education in Canada virtually this year on March 28 and 29. Positioned around the theme “Rural Education Beyond Borders: Reframing the Conversation”, the congress will highlight global perspectives on rural and remote education and research, and includes a keynote address by The Honourable Bev Busson, member of the Senate of Canada, an international expert panel on “Why Rural Matters”, and over 50 learning sessions. Attendees from across Canada and around the globe are registered to attend.

**Edwards School of Business**
In February 2021, the Edwards School of Business (Edwards) celebrated Indigenous Achievement. Our Indigenous Business Student’s Society (IBSS) hosted its first Indigenous Achievement Week Conference with over 253 registrations and sessions on Navigating Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Businesses, Student Journeys, Cultural Showcases and more. Edwards recognized Brayden Caron, Allyn Eger, and Lori Waterhen for achievements in leadership, community involvement and resiliency, and our Enactus USask students held the 14th annual Indigenous Youth Idea Challenge Final Gala with Leading Sage Marketing taking home first place for their business venture.
College of Nursing

Truth and ReconciliACTION and Anti-racism activities in the College of Nursing

In the summer of 2020, the College of Nursing publicly declared a renewed commitment to anti-racism advocacy and education. The college has identified “integrity, social justice, and unconditional positive regard” as key values that underlie our efforts to create diverse, inclusive, and safe learning spaces. Delivering on these values and this commitment is very important to the college.

Dr. Holly Graham (PhD), the Indigenous Research Chair in Nursing, is now on the College Leadership Team and is the co-chair of the Indigenization Committee for the 2025 College of Nursing Plan. She has partnered with the Saskatoon Anti-Racism Network to offer six days of anti-racism education for our college staff and faculty. Four of the six days have now been completed, and the final two days of training will be offered in April. Faculty and staff have expressed gratitude for the training opportunity.

In late 2020, Dr. Graham gifted truth and reconciliACTION lanyard cards to all the students in our graduate and undergraduate programs as well as all faculty and staff. As part of the gifting, Dr. Graham has invited recipients to undertake their personal and professional journey with truth and reconciliation. These lanyard cards have been warmly received, and the cards have now been gifted to the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association (SRNA) Council members and staff.

Some of the many highlights from the Colleges and Schools

College stories:
'The environment is supportive and constant': USask students praise ISAP, STEM Accelerator courses - News - Arts & Science - University of Saskatchewan
https://news.usask.ca/articles/colleges/2021/building-a-better-college-of-medicine.php

Students
https://news.usask.ca/articles/people/2021/alumni-usask-grad,-dolapo-fadare,-advocates-for-representation,-anti-racism,-and-systemic-change..php