

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND ARTISTIC WORK COMMITTEE
FOR INFORMATION ONLY

PRESENTED BY: Marjorie Delbaere, Chair, Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Work Committee

DATE OF MEETING: June 16, 2022

SUBJECT: Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Work Committee Annual Report

COUNCIL ACTION: For information only

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND ARTISTIC
WORK COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL
2021-22**

Terms of Reference

- 1) Recommending to Council on issues and strategies to support research, scholarly and artistic work.
- 2) Recommending to Council on policies and issues related to research integrity and ethics in the conduct of research, scholarly and artistic work.
- 3) Recommending to Council and providing advice to the Vice-President Research on community engagement and knowledge translation activities related to research, scholarly and artistic work.
- 4) Providing advice to the Vice-President Research and reporting to Council on issues relating to the granting agencies which provide funding to the University.
- 5) Providing advice to the Vice-President Research, the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning, and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research on the contributions of undergraduate and graduate students and post-doctoral fellows to the research activity of the University.
- 6) Examining proposals for the establishment of any institute or centre engaged in research, scholarly or artistic work at the University, and providing advice to the planning and priorities committee of Council.
- 7) Receiving an annual reports from the Vice-President Research and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research.
- 8) Receiving and reporting to Council the University's research ethics boards' annual reports.

- 9) Designating individuals to act as representatives of the committee on any other bodies, when requested, where such representation is deemed by the committee to be beneficial.
- 10) Considering the priorities of the University community, such as Indigenization and internationalization, when assessing current and new research, scholarly, and artistic work activities.

Council Members

Marjorie Delbaere (Chair)	Management and Marketing	2024
Natasha Koechl (vice-Chair)	Drama	2023
Steven Rayan	Mathematics and Statistics	2024
Keith Walker	Educational Administration	2024
DeDe Dawson	Library	2023

General Academic Assembly Members

Stephan Milosavljevic	Rehabilitation Science	2024
Mathew Lindsay	Geology	2023
Jim Waldram	Archaeology and Anthropology	2022
Lori Bradford (Vice-chair)	SENS	2022

Other Members (voting)

Baljit Singh	Vice-President Research (ex officio)	
Deborah Burshtyn	Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (ex officio)	
Charlene Sorensen/Melissa Just	University Library (ex officio)	
Tauqeer Iftikhar/ Sharon Jacob	USSU designate	2022
Rifat Zahan	GSA designate	2022

Resource Members

Dion Martens/ Alix Hayden	Director of Research Services and Ethics Office
Laura Zink	Director, Strategic Research Initiatives
Amanda Storey	Committee Secretary, Office of the University Secretary

The Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Work (RSAW) committee met 10 times during the 2021-22. At its meetings, the committee addressed many issues related to research, scholarly and artistic work at the University of Saskatchewan.

The committee received the annual report on breaches of the Responsible Conduct of Research policy and presented this report to University Council for information in November 2021.

The committee reviewed its priorities for the coming year and noted the importance of discussing ways in which RSAW could become a more engaged body of Council and take on more responsibility with respect to the research agenda at the University of Saskatchewan. The committee determined to organize a series of panel discussions on the definition of research, looking this year at what research means for the fine arts, for interdisciplinary research, and for community engaged research. This work identifies the

challenges that current understandings of research pose for these disciplines. The committee intends to continue this work in 2022-23 with the intention of producing a report on the definition of research at USask.

RSAW conducted its annual meeting with the chairs of the university's Research Ethics Boards (REB) and received their annual reports. The committee also discussed the review that was conducted of researchers' experience with the Research Ethics Boards. The REB reports were provided to University Council for information in November 2021.

The committee engaged in numerous consultations with the Vice-President Research as new Signature Areas of Research were proposed and selected. RSAW then worked with the Planning and Priorities Committee and the Teaching, Learning, and Academic Resources Committee to recommend a support strategy for the renewal of the signature areas.

The committee met with a representative to discuss impacts of changes to travel policies on researchers and had discussions with a representative from the OVPR to discuss continuous research funds. The committee continued its discussions on the removal of the active researcher designation from the TABBs model and look forward to hearing more about changes to the TABBs model in the upcoming year.

The RSAW committee received an annual update from the Tri-agency leaders Dawn Wallin (SSHRC), Ron Borowsky (NSERC), and Darcy Marciniuk (CIHR) at its May 5 meeting. Committee members were interested in the success rate of applications of tri-agency funding and with the year over year trends. The varying success rates depending on granting agency were discussed and RSAW appreciated the work being done by all tri-council leaders to improve success rates through mentorship and internal review.

During the final committee meeting in May 2022, the committee discussed the importance of working with the OVPR and other groups on campus to develop an inclusive definition of research, scholarly and artistic works for the University of Saskatchewan.


The service of Lori Bradford and Steven Rayan as representatives of RSAW on the Centres Subcommittee of Planning and Priorities Committee, Stephan Milosavljevic on the Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships, DeDe Dawson as a representative on the New Researcher and Distinguished Researcher Awards Committee, and Steven Rayan and the CFI Advisory Committee is recognized with appreciation. Appreciation is also extended to all presenters who attended the RSAW committee this year. I also want to thank Lori Bradford and Natasha Koechl for their service as vice-chairs this year and acknowledge the outstanding administrative support provided by Amanda Storey.

Attached as appendices to this annual report are the annual reports of the Office of the Vice-President Research and the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies 2021-22.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Annual Report of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for 2021-22

2. Annual report of the Vice-President Research for 2021-22



College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Plan 2025 Report Card & Update



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of Graduate
and Postdoctoral Studies

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

In lieu of the typical annual Dean's report, I provide you this update on the College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies' strategic plan.



Guided by the University of Saskatchewan's four principles of sustainability, diversity, connectivity, and creativity, the college continues to make progress within our three aspirational areas: *Achieving Inclusive Academic Excellence*, *Creating Knowledge and Skills*, and *Rejuvenating Relationships*.


I am immensely proud and grateful of the commitments and contributions made by our staff, the many volunteers who serve on our Standing Committees and Working Groups, the ongoing engagement of Graduate Chairs, Administrators, and faculty as we move the dial to bring our college to the forefront of graduate education in Canada and on the world stage.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. B. ...'.

INTRODUCTION

CGPS is uniquely woven into the University of Saskatchewan; shared values and partnerships are essential for college success. The guiding principles in the CGPS plan are collegiality, progressiveness, and to be aspirational, and the plan prepares the college to respond to new generations of students.

This CGPS Plan that was created in 2018 identified themes to guide our work. The plan stated goals to elevate our profile on and off campus and contribute to the significance and value of graduate education at the University of Saskatchewan. The plan was built to align with the principles of sustainability, diversity, connectivity, and creativity embodied by the University Plan 2025. We aspire to the themes: **Be Bold; Be Ambitious**.

Spring 2022 marks a midpoint and an important inflection point for Plan 2025. Since the launch of the plan in 2018, CGPS has seen significant changes in leadership, adjusted to operating in the pandemic and the need to respond to institutional priorities for equity, decolonization, and reconciliation. In this document, we report tremendous progress toward the original goals of the plan. We also refresh and reframe aspects of the plan to further align the college's priorities with the institution and the evolving environment in which we operate. Watch for orange text to highlight **Indigenization** and  for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) items.

2025 ASPIRATIONS

ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE by mobilizing and reinforcing exceptional graduate student experiences. The CGPS will facilitate and support **growth** of its student body; strengthen its **services** by adopting a strategic approach to recruitment, enrolment, and retention; and discover ways to be **flexible** through updating policies and procedures.

CREATING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS that take graduate students beyond traditional degree outcomes and support them as scholars to be global contributors prepared for a variety of career paths. CGPS will look for ways to challenge the status quo through program **innovation**, elevating equity, decolonization, and work toward lasting **impact** on our community and future graduates.

REJUVENATE RELATIONSHIPS to embolden and activate USask's internal and external graduate community. CGPS will bolster its value proposition, share its **story**, and look for ways to connect USask's graduate **community** in a vibrant community of practice.

ASPIRATION ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE by mobilizing and reinforcing exceptional graduate student experiences. The CGPS will facilitate and support *growth* of its student body; strengthen its *services* by adopting a strategic approach to recruitment, enrolment, and retention; and discover ways to be *flexible* through updating policies and procedures.

GOAL 1: COMMIT TO ROBUST STUDENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Progress:

Admissions: RMS Recruit system fully implemented in 2021/22 to include preapplication feature.

Analytics: Creating self-service dashboards to better understand our student body, allow units direct access to data to inform decisions in real time.

Student Payments: Developed communications to guide students, units, and service providers to prevent unnecessary delays in scholarship and employment pay.

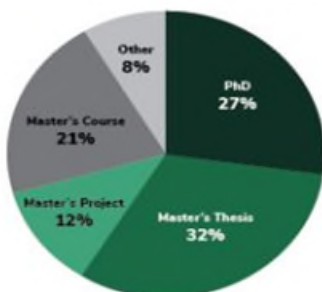
We further commit to:

Enhanced Reporting: For example, calculate time-to-completion and attrition in more sophisticated ways and correlate with other demographic information.

Support Student-Centered Program Management: Improving systems that track individual student progress to support program management (e.g. automated notification of overdue advisory committee meetings).

10,055 applications
4,405 students enrolled
1,041 credentials awarded

14% of Usask students are grad students



GOAL 2: SUPPORT STRATEGIC ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT & RECRUITMENT


Progress:

Centralized Strategic Recruitment: All recruitment positions moved from CGPS to Student Recruitment (TLSE) creating a collaborative approach. Central recruitment officers trained on graduate programs.

Increased domestic efforts: Leveraged new meeting platforms to hold virtual open houses for local students and have presence at regional recruitment events.

Competitive Tuition Strategy: Fall 2022 removal of international differential fees for PhD students.

Strategic Enrolment Management: Inaugural [Enrolment Report 2021/22](#) with demographics, patterns of student enrolment and key student outcomes. Intended to generate questions and discussion, the report will mature over time with additional metrics.

 **EDI and Admissions:** Introduced the graduate community to evidence-based approaches for holistic admissions (Panel Discussion May 27, 2021)

Recruiting Indigenous Students: Created Indigenous Graduate Student Initiatives Coordinator position (term role) to support retention and recruitment.

Reframed Priorities:

The goals around recruitment need to evolve. While many graduate programs are selectors, meaning their application pressure far exceeds capacity, others are recruiters, needing recruitment activity to position their program in competitive national and global contexts. Equity deserving groups need attention and international recruitment efforts should support diversity across programs and limit exposure by relying on a handful of regions. It is essential that we elevate

our effort to recruit Indigenous students to be responsive to the TRC calls to action and ohpahotân.

We further commit to:

Ensure Centralized Recruitment is Strategic: Examples:

i) liaise between colleges/schools and Student Recruitment ensuring needs are understood; ii) closely monitoring return on investment (conversion of activities to quality applications; iii) enhance promotional materials.

 **Promote EDI in admissions practices:**

- Review admission requirements and policies.
- Educate units in best practices for admissions and for scholarships.
- Institute unconscious bias training for faculty serving on academic affairs/admissions committees.

Increase Indigenous Recruitment and Retention: reach parity with the provincial demographics and broaden interest in a range of disciplines.



7% of students self-declare as Indigenous

Indigenous PhD enrolment **increased by 38%***
Master's thesis enrolment **increased by 23%.***

GOALS 3 & 4 Reframed: COMMIT TO IMPROVED AND EQUITABLE SYSTEMS, POLICIES, PROCESSES AND SERVICE STANDARDS

The CGPS will complete a comprehensive review of its policies and processes to ensure they are responsive to

ASPIRATION CREATING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS that take graduate students beyond traditional degree outcomes and support them as scholars to be contributors to the world prepared for a variety of career paths. CGPS will look for ways to challenge the status quo through program *innovation*, elevating equity, decolonization, and inclusion, and work toward lasting *impact* on our community and future graduates.

EDI and that they enhance the ability of academic units to deliver the best possible programming. Administrative load will be reviewed to identify creative and innovative approaches to improve the experience of CGPS stakeholders.

Progress:

Increasing flexibility overall was much accelerated by what was necessary to operate in the pandemic.

Highlights include:

i) Improvements to Admissions: digital transcripts now preferred; piloting delegating approval for domestic admissions to select departments.


ii) Student life-cycle process improvements: – expanding JIRA system to manage transactional processes, reducing forms, using electronic signoff, streamlined thesis submission to ETD, defenses by Zoom.

Policy Change to advisory and examination committee composition and thesis/dissertation defence processes lessens demands on faculty time and empower departments for master's defenses.

We further commit to:

Service Focus: Through fostering a mindset of continuous improvement in our staff, we will adopt best practices and continue to streamline processes to provide outstanding service while containing costs.

Transparent service standards: Publish targets for turnaround of standard items and report on performance.

 **A comprehensive EDI review:** Guided by the university's EDI policy (2020), perform a systematic review of CGPS academic policies, procedures, and practices.

GOAL 5: MOTIVATE AND SUPPORT PROGRAM INNOVATION

Progress:

Increased Student Supports for onboarding, career exploration and professional development:

i) The Grad Hub: a website of specially curated information that allows students to onboard themselves at their own pace and connect to services, activities, and central offerings. ii) Pilot Aurora platform: empowering PhDs to transition to meaningful careers through a unique external professional development training platform launched in partnership with Career Services.

Making change toward reconciliation: The 4 Seasons of Reconciliation short course (via GMCTL) designed specifically for graduate students - promotes anti-racism education through an Indigenous Peoples and Canadians lens.

Removing barriers to incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing in the doctoral process such as our first oral dissertation success **“kihteyhayak pihkswestamawnan: Wisdom Keepers Will Speak for Us”** by trailblazer Chris Scribe (Assistant Professor FNU), supervised by Dawn Wallin.

Elevating Interdisciplinary Studies: Guided by external reviewer recommendations, a Director of Interdisciplinary Programming is now embedded within the CGPS Dean’s Leadership Team. Increased resources to grow the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program and facilitating promoting activities of the program to a wide audience.



Graduate program review shines a light on the success of CGPS’ Interdisciplinary graduate program.

We further commit to:

Encouraging program innovations: i) Foster distinguished learners through articulating degree-level learning outcomes. ii) Ensure efficient approval process

for certificates and diplomas and support microcredential development that are stackable, transferable, and applicable.

Expanding Professional Skills: i) Introduce individual development plan (IDP) tools for all graduate students. ii) create modular offerings in collaboration, leadership, innovation & entrepreneurship, project management, professional communication, EDI, and intercultural competencies for stand-alone use or to embed the training within program curriculum.

Increasing efforts to decolonize graduate education through anti-racism training for staff and faculty and structural changes that enable and validate Indigenous ways of knowing as scholarly output.

GOAL 6: EXPAND INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



37% of students are international

The top three countries by student citizenship are **China** (16%), **Iran** (15%), and **India** (10%).

Progress:

Rejuvenating development of international sponsorship agreements with new agreements for China Scholarship Council students and sponsored students from Egypt.

Removing barriers for dual, cotutelle and visiting research students. For example, adopted the common cotutelle tuition model with to maintain registration while only charging students tuition in one institution at a time.

We further commit to:

Increasing opportunities for inbound and outbound mobility.

GOAL 7: WORK TOWARD MULTI-YEAR PLANNING

Progress:

Instituting multi-year commitments for graduate funding: The [reimagine funding review](#) proposal includes three-year rolling commitments.

Multi-year tuition plan. A multi-year tuition plan was developed that leverages stable government funding to 2024.

We further commit to:

Implementing changes to the student funding streams: to allow academic units to make firm multi-year commitments at the point of admission.

Working with the senior administration to continue multi-year tuition planning.



Reimagine Funding Initiative goal is to simplify allocation methods and provide units better flexibility.

GOAL 8: ENSURE PROGRAM QUALITY

Progress:

Quality Assurance Process Change: In 2019, academic program review was moved under the auspices of the Provost's Office with a new format for the review.

ASPIRATION to embolden and activate USask's internal and external graduate community. CGPS will bolster its value proposition, share its **story**, and look for ways to connect USask's graduate **community** in a community of practice.

Program Reviews to date –
2021: AgBio, Interdisciplinary Studies (virtual site visits)
2022: Education

We further commit to:

Following through on APR recommendations by supporting programs to make the changes.

Establishing cogent degree-level learning outcomes and supporting all programs to articulate aligned program learning outcomes in a way that validates program design and gives students the vocabulary to describe what they know and can do when they have finished supporting their transition to a range of careers.

 **Leading in inclusive excellence.**

GOAL 9: SUPPORT OF POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

Progress:

Elevated Postdoctoral Fellow profile through website revisions that increased [SPS membership](#), and refined communication channels.

Resources for Fellowship Success: Developed and provided fellowship application training and support.


Career Development: Tools and activities created that provide postdocs opportunities to acquire skills important for all career paths (e.g., Individual Development, free access to Aurora Career Planning platform, 3MP communication competition)

REFRAMED GOAL 10: REVISE THE CGPS GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Participatory academic governance is the foundation of a strong, collegial, and nimble graduate community and the governance structures need to evolve to meet the needs of our programs, faculty, and students. The existence of two senior governing structures of CGPS in the Graduate Faculty Council and the Graduate and Postdoctoral Council with overlapping mandates and authorities creates confusion. The approval pathways for new and revised programs are deemed slow and at times counterproductive. A new set of college bylaws will feature a revised governance structure designed with a commitment to transparency and streamlined processes.

Progress:

Improved Program Approvals: removed unnecessary steps for approval; co-located course and program approvals in one committee.

Governance Renewal: Undertook phased approach to refresh and recalibrate the [college governance](#) that streamlined the number of committees, updated responsibilities and mandated an EDI lens be brought to each committee's work. 

We further commit to:

College bylaws - completion and implementation.

Membership Update – review and update policies and processes to better manage the membership and ensure services and supports are adequate.

Indigenization and decolonization - guided by Ohpahotân and supported by OVPIE, develop our college level Indigenous Strategy to provide access, mentorship, changes to structures, and training for faculty and staff.

REFRAMED GOAL 11: EMPOWER COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS BY DEVELOPING ROLE CLARITY BUILD A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CGPS AND TEACHING COLLEGES/SCHOOLS/DEPARTMENTS

CGPS and the teaching colleges/schools share responsibility for graduate programs and graduate students. The colleges and schools manage and resource programs while CGPS provides leadership by setting institution-wide policy and standards, stewards millions of dollars in graduate funding from internal and external sources and performs many registrarial functions with respect to the management of graduate programs. CGPS also provides service to solving complex multi-party problems and conflicts. Success for this joint responsibility requires continued collaboration and strong bidirectional communication. CGPS is committed to supporting units in their work with graduate students through communicating, training, and providing resource materials.

Progress:

Improved Internal Communications: regularized internal communications and created various channels to enhance stakeholder engagement and college communication efforts (e.g. operational bulletins, newsletters, stakeholder forums).

Increased Resources for Training Staff: Developed training tools and opportunities to connect with others who support graduate programming and students (e.g. graduate administrator handbook, graduate chair guide recruiter onboarding).

Projects with stakeholder engagement:

- [Reimagine Graduate Funding](#)
- [Advisory committee and defence](#) working group
- [EDI policy review](#) (in progress).
- Professional skills/990 project

We further commit to:

Sustained training for graduate administrators and graduate chairs.

Bringing ideas to the community: Catalyze change and best practices by inviting external experts to engage our community.

Rebalancing of decision-making authorities: Ensuring decisions are made at the right level (department, school/college or CGPS) by subject-matter experts and one-over-one approval required only as deemed necessary for risk to student or institution.

GOAL 12: TELL THE COLLEGE STORY

Formalized Communications Strategy: In 2019 the college adopted its first internal formal communication strategy and developed its Be Bold, Be Ambitious campaign. Key objectives of the strategy were to: communicate the college's mission and vision and create *brand awareness*; deepen, strengthen, and rediscover relationships in *celebration* of graduate student and postdoctoral scholarly success; Position the CGPS as a *leader of graduate education*.

Progress:

Recent **telling our story events** features have included: Rebranding the Distinguished Graduate Mentor award (2021); Showcasing our emerging talent by featuring current graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to Saskatchewan's Minister of Education (2021); "A toast to graduating doctoral students" synchronous celebration (June 2021); the [75th Anniversary magazine and website](#).

We further commit to:

Outstanding communications: through continued development on the college communication strategy with a heavy focus on stakeholder relationships and service ethos.

GOAL 13: CULTIVATE LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALUMNI

The experiences of our alumni while they were students and during their working careers can inform the evolution of our academic programs. Alumni will be invited to share their experiences to help our programs

remain relevant and strong. Alumni will also be instrumental in helping us to anticipate changes, opportunities, and challenges within our global environment, ensuring that our programs and institution are responsive to the expectations of the next generation of scholars.

We further commit to

Learning about and from our Alumni: Conducting a PhD/PDF Alumni Study, ongoing events that celebrate students and postdoctoral fellows' achievements beyond their tenure at USask, and finding ways to connect current students with Alumni.

Please send questions or feedback on this report to debby.burshtyn@usask.ca.



Office of the Vice-President Research

Annual Report

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



Land Acknowledgment

The University of Saskatchewan is on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.



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Office of the Vice-President Research

I am pleased to present an annual report from the Office of the Vice-President Research for the 2021-22 academic year.

Fifteen months have passed since I started in the role as Vice-President Research for the University of Saskatchewan. I vividly recall the moment I walked across Nobel Plaza and looked at the Peter MacKinnon Building in awe when I arrived for my inauguration in September 2020.

At that moment, I was overcome with a sense of pride because I would be returning to an institution whose esteemed history was built on the collective vision and cumulative accomplishments of many former leaders, scholars, alumni, students, and community partners. I also felt a deep sense of responsibility because I would soon have the privilege and honor of serving one of Canada's top research-intensive medical-doctoral universities. This sense of pride and responsibility guides me to this day.

The University of Saskatchewan is at a unique and pivotal juncture. At no point in our institution's more than one-hundred-year history have we witnessed greater opportunity – and more urgent possibility – than we do today.

Our University Plan calls on us to be “the university the world needs”. More than ever, researchers and scholars from all disciplines - ranging from fine arts, humanities, social sciences, health sciences, natural and engineering sciences - are galvanizing around this call and making a lasting and positive impact to the many communities we serve.

The Office of the Vice-President Research also plays a critical role in responding to this call. As a support centre, we provide visionary leadership and strategic direction to the university's research scholarly, and artistic works enterprise. This is achieved through the provision of programs, services, and supports that enable university scholars to maximize their potential.

I am deeply proud of the hard work, dedication, and commitment that all members of the research office bring to supporting university faculty, staff, and students. They demonstrate an unwavering commitment to five values in their day-to-day work - creativity, respect, integrity, results, and excellence.

In October 2021, I delivered my first “Campus Address from the Vice-President Research” at which time I committed to re-framing the research narrative of our institution to one characterized by greater inclusivity, inspiration, and innovation. This would be achieved by galvanizing community, aligning structures, and invigorating research, scholarly, and artistic works.

Significant progress has been made towards re-framing the research narrative over the past twelve months. Some highlights from 2021-22 include:

- Associate Vice-Presidents Research: Two positions were created in response to campus feedback - one focusing on engagement, the other on research ethics and infrastructure. I am proud to welcome Dr. Dawn Wallin and Dr. Terry Fonstad to each of these roles and my leadership team.
- Signature Areas Renewal: the Provost and Vice-President Research co-led a renewal of the university’s signature areas of research. Over 600 faculty engaged in the process, 23 “pitches” were received, and 3 new signature areas were established - health and wellness, communities and sustainability, and quantum innovation.
- Living Skies Post-Doctoral Fellows: The Dean, College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, and Vice-President Research established this program to attract and retain cohorts of interdisciplinary graduate students to the province. Funding was awarded for 18 post-doctoral fellows. The second annual call for applications will be released shortly.

I invite you to read about many other achievements in this annual report. Additionally, I want to commend our entire university community for their tremendous accomplishments over the past year. Together, we are proving that we are the university the world needs.

Baljit Singh
Vice-President Research
University of Saskatchewan

Highlights by the Numbers:

\$234,646,689 in total research revenue received by USask.

\$16.2 M received from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

\$3.78 M received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

\$25.4 M received from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

672 new research projects awarded leading to over **\$65 M** in new funding.

1,008 applications submitted to tri-council and non-tri-council research funding agencies.

100,740 animals cared for and used in USask facilities and field studies.

159 patent families and **79** licenses actively managed by USask.

659 new research contracts managed whose value exceeds **\$125 M**.

409 active international agreements managed with more than **360** entities in over **60** countries on behalf of USask.

142 Chairholders and Professorships, including **32** Canada Research Chair allocations, of which **18** are currently filled.

Home to **3** National Research Facilities, including the Canadian Light Sources (CLS), Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), and SuperDARN.



Research Acceleration and Strategic Initiatives

Research Acceleration and Strategic Initiatives (RASI) provides a holistic approach to research and grant support for USask scholars. This is reflected in our two-part interrelated mandate:

- **Research Acceleration:** providing a full suite of strategic and practical supports to position researchers and research groups for success in individual, collaborative, and institutional awards.
- **Strategic Initiatives:** leading institutional initiatives to support research career development for faculty and undergraduate students including: research grant support (pre- and post-award), large-scale and institutional grant facilitation and management, undergraduate research, partner engagement, and research cluster development.

In 2021-22, RASI continued to support the university's research community through programs and services that build research capacity and strengthen connections across campus and with key partners.

Developing Research Capacity and Community

Research Development Support

RASI taps into existing expertise to support stronger proposals and partnerships, while providing mentorship, peer support and opportunities for growth. Some programs offered in 2021-22 include:

- **Specialized and Strategic Supports:** over 300 researchers participated in various programs, such as Test Your Concept (CFI-IF, CIHR Health Research Training Platform, NSERC CREATE, SSHRC Partnership), proposal development workshops (CFI JELF, NSERC CREATE, SSHRC PDG), pitch prep workshops, and virtual workshops and panels.
- **Peer Review Programs:** over 100 faculty participated in peer review programs for various federal granting programs. Internal reviews improve proposals and increase success rates.
- **Pre-Eminent Expert Reviewers (PEER):** promotes a culture of research intensity, through faculty

mentorship and expertise as panelists at workshops and Test Your Concepts, members on advisory committees and internal reviewers for draft research proposals.

- Reference tools: RASI's reference tools, including a grants repository, tri-agency program snapshots, and new this year an EDI guide to support scholars apply for grants across all disciplines, agencies, and programs.

Faculty-Focused Service Improvements

RASI's commitment to improving its services has led to several changes which ease administrative burden on researchers. In 2021-22:

- RASI secured funding through the Strategic Priority Initiatives and is working with staff and faculty in the social sciences, humanities and fine arts to implement a holistic approach to post award management. Roll-out of the new model will happen in summer 2022.
- RASI led a cross-unit team to complete revisions to Continuous Research Funds process and protocols. The new transparent guidelines will support researchers in maximizing use of their funds while also reducing administrative burden.
- Research Support Specialists advanced several process improvements including streamlining fund closure processes to eliminate duplication of requests on Principle Investigators, and revising sub-transfer agreement request processes to clarify post-award inquiries.
- Changes in CFI award management reduced the time spent re-confirming commitments at award acceptance, and changes to the Infrastructure Operating Fund have reduced administrative work.
- RASI redesigned the CFI-IF process to engage the provincial government in prioritizing proposals, and to develop, with researchers and college leadership, funding strategies, and strengthen engagement of IPLD, EPMO, ICT.
- Research Support Specialists have emerged as a first point of contact on award applications for colleges and schools without a research facilitator.

- A new budget model for Canada Research Chair program has been developed to improve and encourage college participation in the program.
- For 12 months, a Research Data Management Working Group has been developing institutional strategies using a gap analysis finished up the prior year. This group has representation from several units, including RASI, to ensure research administration perspectives are considered.

Support for Community-Engaged Research

RASI also provides partnership development and community engagement supports to researchers.

- Research Junction: facilitates partnership and collaborations between City of Saskatoon experts and university scholars. In 2021-22, the program awarded 4 new grants, hosted a 3-day virtual delegation with partnering institutions, launched a series of stories celebrating results and impacts of inaugural projects, and supported new applications for Mitacs and NSERC Alliance programs.
- Pathways to Equity: RASI continues to support the development of this cross-disciplinary and inter-sectoral research cluster. In November 2021, the working group hosted a virtual workshop with over 76 participants entitled "Housing Insecurity, Renter Equity & Homelessness".
- USask's SSHRC Partnership Development Grant Pilot: launched in summer 2021 to support a cohort of four faculty members to apply for a partnership development grant.

Research Performance and Grants

In 2021-22, RASI's grant management offerings, which include intuitive services across the research life cycle (pre- and post-award) as well as support for large-scale grant facilitation and management, supported:

- 672 newly funded research projects and a total of \$65 Million in external research grants awarded.
- 1132 research project amendments, which was a 30% increase from pre-pandemic times, attributed to pandemic-related grant extensions.
- 719 project applications submitted externally.

Tri-Agency Performance: Individual-Driven Grants

In 2021-22, RASI supported 91 proposals (55%) through the Internal Peer Review program available for CIHR Project Grant, SSHRC Insight, Insight Development, and Partnership Development, NFRF Exploration, and NSERC Discovery Grants and RTIs.

USask researchers were awarded \$10.M via these federal granting programs. Success rates for these programs are generally 19%. This increases to 20% for proposals that underwent internal review.

Strategic and Tri-Agency Large-Scale Grants

RASI offers strategic facilitation, proposal development and select post-award management for institutional and large-scale collaborative grants. Highlights from 2021-22 include:

- NSERC CREATE INSPIRE: Interdisciplinary Network for the Synchrotron: Promoting Innovation, Research and Enrichment - \$1.65 M (total project budget: \$3.5 M) awarded.
- NSERC Alliance Innovation and interdisciplinary research to understand the causes and mitigate consequences of environmental change in the Boreal Plains. - \$1.9 M (total project budget: \$2.9 M) awarded.
- CIHR SPOR SUPPORT Unit Phase II - SCPOR 2.0 (Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research Phase II Renewal) - \$12.5 M (total project budget: \$25.1 M) awarded.

RASI is also proud to have helped achieve several other outcomes related to grant submissions. In 2021-22:

- USask had an all-time high of 4 NSERC CREATE Full Proposals (invited from 6 Letters of Intent).
- USask was invited to submit a SSHRC Stage 2 Partnership Grant for the fourth year in a row (results embargoed).
- USask submitted an \$89.5 M LOI for the esteemed Canada First Research Excellence Fund.
- USask had its first successful large-scale, multi-sector NSERC Alliance application. This project includes private, public, industry, and Indigenous

community partners.

- 8 CFI NOIs submitted for two key competitions, including: the development of 5 NOIs for the CFI Major Science Initiatives Competition; support for 3 CFI Innovation Fund NOIs; and 4 CFI MSI full proposals submitted for \$275M.

Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI)

CFI provides funding for research infrastructure, including labs, facilities and equipment. RASI's CFI team provides both pre- and post-award support for CFI programs. Highlights from 2021-22 include:

- \$1.2 M for CFI-JELFs (6 awarded) for CFI-JELFs awarded.
- Support for USask's first large-scale JELF. An internal Expression of Interest process took place in January 2022, with a full proposal expected to be submitted in October 2022.
- Provided post-award support for Integrated Genomics for Sustainable Animal Agriculture and Environmental Stewardship (IntegrOmes) - \$6.7 M (Total project budget - \$16.9 M) and the Canadian Agricultural Centre for Engineering Biology (CACEB) - \$ 3.2 M (Total project budget - \$9.2 M).

RASI supported other major CFI competitions including the: 2023 CFI Innovation Fund competition, and CFI Biosciences Research Infrastructure Fund (BRIF).

Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Program

The CRC Program invests and directs significant resources towards attracting and retaining some of the world's most promising minds. USask holds 32 CRC's- 17 of which are active or filled. Over the past academic year, RASI supported two new CRC nominations, and five CRC recruitments.

In 2021-22, USask was awarded or renewed three CRCs, for a total award of \$1.7M.

In 2021, the EDI Faculty Champions program, a two-module workshop, was implemented, with Human Resources, to support the leads of search committees in delivering on EDI goals. The program has trained 18 committee leads, associated with 7 searches including CRC & CERC.

Undergraduate Research Initiative

First Year Research Experiences (FYRE)

FYRE engages faculty to embed a mentored research experience into a first-year course; research coaches support students to experience the research cycle (question, investigate, share) and develop research confidence. Over 2200 students participated in FYRE courses in 2021-22. To date, almost 20,000 students developed research skills via FYRE courses.

NSERC USRAs

The NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA) program transferred from CGPS to RASI this year. USask was awarded 60 NSERC USRAs for 2022 (with a value of \$6000/student) and received about 130 applications to fill those spots. USask was able to increase the number of Indigenous student awardees to 6. Delivery of the employment letters and journal entries improved considerably this competition through coordinated efforts with ConnectionPoint.

Student Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE)

SURE is a co-curricular program supporting undergraduate students conducting course-based, independent, or faculty-mentored research. In partnership with units across campus, SURE had 800 students participating in 100 events since May 2021. 200+ students qualified for co-curricular credit to date.

Supplementing the programming are podcasts, recorded SURE presentations, and a social media presence with over 2700 followers. The recorded SURE presentations have been viewed 9600 times and the 17 podcasts have been listened to 463 times.

MentorSTEP

The MentorSTEP pilot finished in fall of 2021, with a final report submitted to the funder, International Minerals Innovation Institute (iMii). The program was a huge success. In summer 2021, MentorSTEP successfully matched 9 students with summer internships, five off-campus with industry partners, and four on-campus with USask faculty.

The MentorSTEP model inspired the new program STEM+, funded by iMii and led by the Indigenous Students Achievement Pathways (ISAP) program in the College of Arts and Science. This program will run for two years and will work closely with RASI's Undergraduate Research Initiative.

Highlights by the Numbers:

672 new research projects awarded leading to over **\$65 M** in new funding, including:

\$4.8 M in NSERC Alliance grants

\$8.5 M in CIHR Project Grants

\$5.9 M in COVID-19 related funding

Supported **719** new project application submissions to external agencies.

27 strategic and large-scale Tri-Agency proposals submitted for \$379 M, results pending.

Over **\$16 M** in large-scale agency funding announced in 2021-22 (total project budgets: \$31.5 M).

100 researchers had their proposals reviewed and strengthened through RASI's internal review programs.

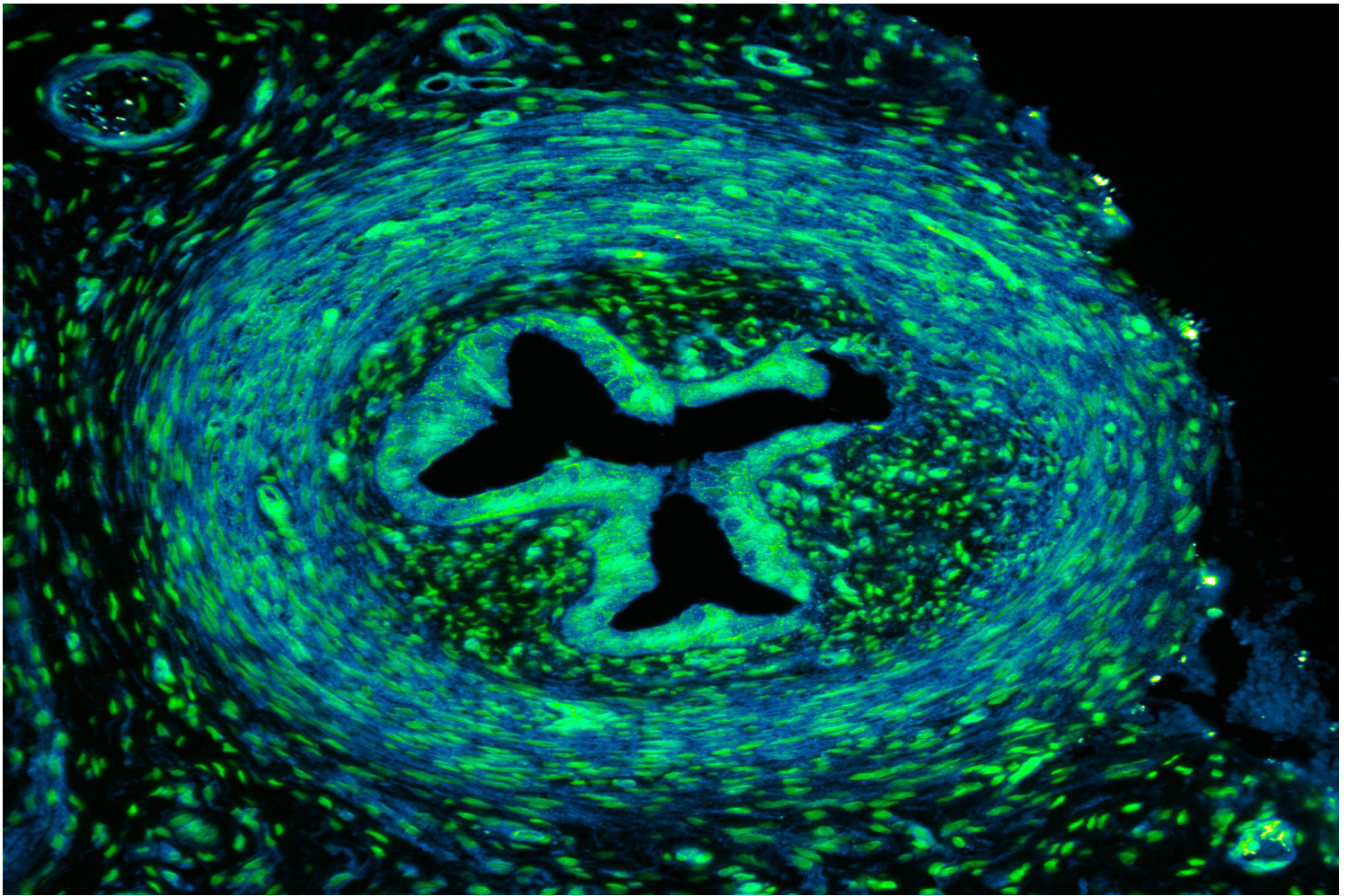
1132 research project amendments processed, a 30% increase from pre-pandemic times, attributed to pandemic-related grant extensions.

Over **300** researchers attended grant development, equity diversity and inclusion and other special topic workshops.

2200 enrolments in First Year Research Experience courses.

800 student participants in the new co-curricular Student Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE).

\$1.7 M in funding to support the Canada Research Chair program.



Research Excellence and Innovation

Research Excellence and Innovation (REI) aims to support and high-quality and ethical research, scholarly, and artistic pursuits. It has a two-part interrelated mandate:

- **Research Excellence:** Supporting high-quality research activities, by helping researchers engage in strategic research partnerships, manage risk, and meet relevant ethics, legal and safety standards.
- **Innovation:** Creating significant and sustainable value for society, industry and the environment, by helping researchers turn their discoveries into solutions the world needs.

REI's programs, services, and supports span the lab-to-market spectrum. It is comprised of several teams, including: Animal Care and Research Support, Behavioural and Biomedical Research Ethics, and Partnerships and Innovation Mobilization.

Animal Care and Research Supports

The Animal Care and Research Support (ACRS) office supports animal-based research in numerous ways including management of animal use protocol (AUP) review, post-approval review, training, advising, and performing animal work.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a significant reduction in animal-based research performed at the University of Saskatchewan. However, over the past 6-9 months, the level of animal-based research has increased to near pre-pandemic levels.

The Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) requires scientific merit review of all new and 4-year renewal research Animal Use Protocols (AUPs). For any research AUPs which are not funded by a peer-reviewed agency, the AUP is reviewed by the OVPR Scientific Merit Review Committee for Animal-Based Research (SMRCABR).

The SMRCABR has been functioning since 2018. In 2021-22, thirty-six AUPs were reviewed during this reporting period. The SMRCABR continued to review AUPs related to SARS-CoV-2 research.

The CCAC requires pedagogical merit review of all new and 4-year renewal teaching AUPs. All USask courses for credit (undergraduate or graduate) which involve the use of animals require review by the Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (TLSE) Pedagogical Merit Review Committee (PMRC) prior to Animal Research Ethics Board (AREB) approval. This committee was established in spring 2019.

In 2021-22, the PMRC met several times to review the Pedagogical Merit Review Form for Use of Animals in Teaching and Training submitted by instructors. To date, pedagogical merit review is complete for 15 AUPs. The PMRC is using a phased-in approach to review the 28 active teaching AUPs to ensure all teaching AUPS receive merit review within the next 3-4 years. The ACRS Animal Specialist manages the AREB, SMRCABR and the PMRC.

The office has provided 95 training sessions for various animal research related needs. Training sessions include animal handling, surgical skills, anesthesia, euthanasia, and research specific techniques. All training is provided by the Clinical Veterinarians, Animal Order Desk Technicians, Animal Technicians, and the Aquatics Manager.

Additionally, the ACRS office trained two senior year veterinary students each spending two-week rotations with ACRS. The students are trained in laboratory animal medicine and learn about the specific processes used at USask for managing animal research, teaching, and testing.

The Animal Order Desk (AOD) coordinates the shipment and reporting of animals to USask and any animal shipments from USask to other institutions for collaborative research. In 2021-21, total animal order desk sales totaled \$695,000.

OVPR managed facilities include the Laboratory Animal Services Unit (LASU) in the Health Sciences Building and the animal vivarium in the Collaborative Research Services Building (CSRB).

The Animal Care and Research Supports team play a critical role in providing care and housing to over 100,000 animals involved in USask facilities and field studies, including: 29,737 chickens, 20,324 mice, 16,925 fish, 1,631 hamsters, 1,304 rats, 587 sheep, 362 dogs, 215 cats, 41 rabbits, and 4 reptiles, to highlight a few.

Behavioural and Biomedical Research Ethics

The Behavioural and Biomedical Research Ethics team provides compliance-related supports for research involving living human participants, human biological materials, and secondary use of data, health information, or biological research. In 2021-22:

- Biomedical ethics administered 275 new applications, 565 amendments, 706 renewals, and 127 closures. 67 full board reviews were required whereas 176 delegated reviews and 32 exemptions were granted. These metrics are consistent with the previous academic year.
- Behavioural ethics administered 550 protocol submissions, 414 amendments, 539 renewals, and 204 closures. 14 full board reviews were required whereas 336 delegated reviews and 162 exemptions were granted. These metrics are consistent with the previous academic year.
- Dr. Terry Fonstad, Associate Vice-President Research, was welcomed to the OVPR leadership team. Oversight of animal and human ethics are a critical component of his role and chief amongst his priorities includes improving processing time for human ethics applications and reviews. Short-term funding was allocated to reduce the backlog of research ethics applications and a long-term plan is being developed to streamline administration more holistically. This work will continue into the 2022-23 academic year.

The Behavioural and Biomedical Research Ethics team has been working hard to reduce administrative burden on USask scholars. In 2021-22, they:

- Continued supporting and improving data entry processes into UnivRS, the university's research management system. This system remains a challenge for USask scholars and the OVPR is investigating opportunities for its replacement.

- Concluded a one-year trial of a reciprocity agreement whereby local ethics committees (LEC's) were included in existing processes in order to provide local context regarding research ethics considerations for studies occurring outside of Saskatoon and Regina.
- Implemented several process improvements aimed at expediting research ethics processing times, including accepting exemption requests by email instead of requiring a full application, granting acknowledgments of research approved at other institutions, delegating authority for approval for low-risk submissions to senior staff members, and meeting with Metis Nations Saskatchewan to discuss issues and opportunities related to data sovereignty.

Partnerships and Innovation Mobilization

Innovation Mobilization

The process of innovation mobilization often begins with an innovation disclosure from a potential inventor, which is assessed by REI staff for commercial potential. In 2021-22, REI:

- Received 24 new disclosures from 16 different departments and eight different colleges or schools.
- Filed 13 new patents during the past fiscal year, contributing to a total of 159 patent families. A patent family is the collection of all patents that derive from a single invention, including separate patents and filings required globally. While patent approvals are pending, work begins to find potential partners interested in licensing rights to use the invention.
- Secured 27 license agreements, an increase of 6 over the previous year. These are now part of the 79 active licenses under management at REI.

Innovation Support Initiatives

In 2021-22, REI continued delivering a suite of programs and ecosystems supports aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and innovation mobilization. Highlights include:

- Mitacs Business Strategy Internships. REI provides project-management support for the Mitacs

Business Strategy Internships (BSI) program. A new Mitacs program in 2020, the program offers real world experience for undergraduate and graduate students through a four-month internship with a business or not-for-profit organization. Over the past 12 months, REI facilitated 103 placements for students, an increase of more than 80 compared to the first year of the program. These included students from 18 different departments/colleges and included five interns in a dedicated Indigenous Pathways stream.

- Ecosystem Partner highlights: REI continues to support the Co.Launch startup market validation program at Co.Labs, the technology incubator located in Saskatoon. During the past year, our support expanded to Co.Learn, which focuses on developing skills in students and youth interested in working in the province's growing tech sector.
- In 2021-22 REI entered a new partnership with Cultivator, the technology incubator located in Regina. USask joins Sask Polytech and the University of Regina in supporting a new venture capital-backed agtech accelerator program at Cultivator, which will allow our students and researchers to engage with agtech startups from across Canada and the UK.

New Inventions Management Framework

In 2021-22, REI developed a new approach to inventions management that embraces inventor ownership of intellectual property when inventors choose this path, paired with new dedicated supports for inventors throughout the commercialization process.

Principles of this framework eagerly support startup creation, commit to timeliness and increased transparency in our work with research sponsors, embrace manachitowin, and acknowledge that our motivation in our intellectual property mobilization work is not revenue generation, but rather achieving meaningful external impact in our mission to be the University the world needs.

Research Partnerships

Each year, USask partners with governments, industry, non-profits and other post-secondary institutions to advance discovery the world needs. The lawyers and contract specialists within the OVPR negotiate and

administer these partnership agreements. 2021-22 highlights include:

- 659 new research contracts managed valued at \$125,512,374, an increase of \$35.5 M over last year.
- 376 total contracts amendments managed valued at \$19,874,847.

Innovation Mobilization Highlight Industry partnerships are an important component of innovation mobilization at USask and the process of commercialization often involves licensing rights to these partners, so the impact of our work can be realized in the community.

A prime example from the past year is a medical device invented by Dr. Mike Moser, USask Associate Professor of General Surgery, who identified a need in his practice for a product that could enhance the efficiency of kidney transplantation by controlling organ temperature during surgery. This device has the potential to reduce early complications after surgery and to improve long term outcomes.

REI worked closely with Dr. Moser and his team to patent the medical device, provided proof-of-concept funding to advance prototype development, and developed a commercialization strategy. These efforts resulted in an exclusive license agreement with Paragonix Technologies, an international medical device company specializing in optimizing solid organ transplantation. The impact of this partnership will be seen not only through revenue back to USask, but also in the advancement of our inventor's research program and, most importantly, improved patient outcomes.

Soft Launch of Opus

REI is proud to have recently launched Opus, a pre-accelerator program designed to support the unique needs of USask founders. Pilot programming begins in June 2022 where individuals and teams with a "deep tech innovation" will be prioritized.

Opus provides business knowledge, access to infrastructure, and advice from business experts and mentors in order to help USask scholars who are ready to mobilize their invention on campus. A formal launch is scheduled for fall 2022.

Highlights by the Numbers:

36 Animal Use Protocols reviewed by the Scientific Merit Review Committee for Animal-Based Research.

95 animal research-related training sessions provided to the community community.

\$695,000 in total animal order desk sales.

100,740 animals cared for and used in USask facilities and field studies, including:

29,737 chickens

20,324 mice

16,925 fish

587 sheep

362 dogs

215 cats

41 rabbits

275 new applications, **565** amendments, **706** renewals, and **127** closures for biomedical ethics.

550 protocol submissions, **414** amendments, **539** renewals, and **204** closures for behavioural ethics.

24 invention disclosures received from **16** different departments.

13 new patents filed, contributing to a total of **159** patent families.

103 placements facilitated via the Mitacs Business Strategy Internship program, representing an increase of **80** placements from the previous year.

1,035 total research contracts managed whose value exceeds **\$145M**.



Research Profile and Impact

Research Profile and Impact (RPI) tells the university's research story to the world – through strategic communications involving print, video, web, social media, advertisements, speeches, opinion editorials, and events.

RPI plays a critical role in building USask's reputation as a U15 institution, which in turn helps bolster our placement in university rankings and attract top talent, public and private investment, as well as support from alumni and partners.

As the university's liaison with federal and provincial granting agencies, RPI ensures compliance with communication requirements and leading high-profile events to showcase our research funding successes.

Working in coordination with University Relations and a network of USask college and research centre communicators, RPI is here to help researchers celebrate their success, effectively tell their stories, and demonstrate their impact to the world.

Building Capacity and Growing Supports

In 2021-22, RPI secured short-term funding which enabled it to recruit three new staff members and expand its service offerings for university scholars.

Nikki Desjardins, Sarath Peiris, and Brooke Kleiboer were recruited into term positions which provide award nominations and communications support at the college and institutional level. In less than six months, they have prepared and submitted six faculty and staff award nominations externally. They have also played a critical role in developing various print and digital communications across the institution.

Jennifer Drennan was also recruited into a term position which provides cross-portfolio coordination, data analysis, and strategic planning to rankings activities at the university. Over the coming year, she will be working alongside college, school, and university leadership teams to implement initiatives which help improve our placement across several university rankings.

Transition Towards Digital First Strategy

RPI has two decades of experience leading strategic research communications and supporting university scholars in telling their story and demonstrating their impact to the world. Renewed leadership and staff members in this unit have brought new energy and plans to adopt a digital first strategy for research communications at USask.

In 2021-22, RPI continued to offer a full range of traditional research communications supports, including the highly-subscribed Discovery Digest, press releases, speaking notes, opinion editorials, and other print media. A suite of new tools have been developed to make external communications nimbler, fresher, and digital-first. Several examples of these tools are described below.

Telling Our Research Story

Stories and Releases

RPI, like all OVPR units, is busy supporting researchers and ensuring the world knows about the exciting work done at USask.

In 2021-22, a total of 99 press releases were prepared either solely by the unit or by working with college and centre communicators. Top news stories for the past year include:

- Visible tattoos give psychologist more cred
- USask researchers cited in Stanford list
- Disrupting COVID-19 with new treatments
- Who is avoiding COVID-19 vaccine
- USask PhD student earns Alexander Bell scholarship

The Conversation Canada

USask is a founding partner of national academic newswire, The Conversation Canada, which provides independent, high-quality journalism. In the past year, USask researchers authored a total of 20 news articles and opinion pieces.

Young Innovators

USask student researchers are harnessing creativity and drive to make discoveries and uncover new knowledge in areas that matter to Canadians. The ongoing Young Innovators series highlights examples of student research at USask in all disciplines.

This initiative is a partnership with USask Research Profile and Impact and The Saskatoon StarPhoenix. They are often shared both nationally and internationally by various media outlets.

From August 2021 to present, 27 Young Innovators stories have been sent to the Saskatoon StarPhoenix for publication.

Pitches and Expert Lists

RPI has developed a basic template to be used to pitch researchers and projects to the media. This is intended to promote and entice newsrooms and reporters into being interested in USask research. In 2021-22, RPI created more than 30 pitches.

Pitches can be used:

- To follow up on funding or other omnibus releases to ensure individual projects and researchers get the attention they deserve.
- When time does not permit for the creation of a full press release.
- When a targeted approach with specific media outlets makes more sense than a general release, or when we want to grant exclusivity to a reporter or outlet.
- In collaboration with University Communications, RPI is creating topical expert lists of researchers to provide to media in response to news events.

For example, when there are major events like flooding in British Columbia or drought on the Prairies, USask can provide media with a list to ensure our experts in climate change are being engaged. It is hard to create lists on short notice, so this is an effort to be proactive. In effect, this is a variation on our pitching tool. Other institutions have found this method to be highly effective in generating coverage.

RPI will take suggestions for researchers who should be included, will take responsibility for connecting with the researchers to ensure they are willing to be on the list, and keeping the lists updated. RPI will also offer media training to those who would like it prior to joining the list.

Researchers who wish to be on the expert list should be prepared to:

- Be on a public-facing, searchable list and generally available to take media requests on short notice (often the same day) to provide insight on a specific topic
- Have experience in media interviews or have received training/coaching in media relations

The media relations specialist in University Communications will sign off on the list and distribute to media as they see fit.

Research Minute

USask Research Minute videos are short-form video clips designed for social media that profile USask researchers and their work in 60-70 seconds of footage. Each video is unique, as footage of the researcher explaining a specific project, finding or impact of their work can be incorporated along with photos or project video clips.

They are also a flexible tool, as they can be filmed independently from a smartphone or computer, or via Zoom with a member of the RPI team. Video release can be timed with a written announcement, a special event or released on their own.

Professional Development

How to tell your research story is a new monthly professional development program which has been established on the last Wednesday of every month. Topics so far in 2022 included: basic media training, writing for The Conversation Canada, a session with Saskatchewan opinion editors, and plain language for researchers.

Discovery Digest

Discovery Digest is a monthly newsletter that highlights the best news and upcoming events from the world of USask research. It is automatically distributed to all USask faculty, staff and graduate students, as well as to a list of manual subscribers maintained on an internal listserv. RPI introduced a new submission form that makes it easier for communicators across campus to submit their research-related stories and events.

The average open rate for the newsletter is over 55%, whereas the average industry open rate is around 25%. Interest in research news remains high among our manual subscribers and USask community members that receive Discovery Digest.

LinkedIn

RPI launched a LinkedIn social media account as a pilot project to chart the public's appetite for research news in their professional networks. A total of 462 organic followers were gained with no budget expenditure on content.

Images of Research

Organized by RPI, USask's Images of Research competition is a chance for the USask community including students, faculty, staff, and alumni to submit photos that best represent their research, scholarly and artistic work.

The eighth annual competition featured:

- 92 image entries in five submission categories from students, faculty, staff and alumni representing 11 colleges, one school, one research centre, and the university library
- A total of seven judging panels made up of students, staff, faculty, and community members
- Over 2,000 public votes cast in the Viewer's Choice category
- Over 13,000 views of the contest online

Visiting

Visiting is a new video series that will help the university share its stories, strengthen kinship, and learn from one another.

A highlight of the year in RPI was the production and release of the four-part Visiting video series. USask alumni and engineer Matthew Dunn, Senior Strategic Officer, Indigenous Engagement interviewed guests, Indigenous researchers at USask who are carving out new paths.

There was an exciting kick-off event in February at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, and the video was featured on SaskTel Max across the province. A new season of videos is planned for release by end of 2022.

Signature Areas Renewal Communications

In 2021-22, RPI played a critical role in developing a communications strategy and products for the signature areas renewal project, including maintaining a project website and drafting institutional communications.

The unit's role in supporting communications for the signature areas is expected to grow when the new "signature areas support strategy" is launched.

Awards and Recognition

For the first time, RPI is coordinating the application for external faculty awards. There is one full-time equivalent position funded on a non-permanent basis.

In less than five months, staff have completed an external environment scan, internal inventory of past awards, nominees and existing processes, website updates (in progress), and identified awards that could immediately be supported.

RPI's awards and nominations team has already helped prepared several award nominations for prestigious recognitions, including: the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Fellowship , SSHRC Awards , Multiple NSERC Prizes, and L'Oréal Canada For Women in Science Research Excellence Fellowships

Over the coming year, RPI's awards staff will be focused on promoting potential awards and upcoming deadlines, identifying suitable nominees and nominators, supporting award nominations, coordinating internal reviews, recognizing success through communications, tracking and reporting on nominations and success, and hold training/ promotional sessions to educate researchers and leaders on the nomination processes.

Highlights by the Numbers:

A total of **99** press releases were prepared which highlight the success and impact of USask scholars.

27 Young Innovators stories have been sent to the Saskatoon StarPhoenix for publication since August 2021.

18 USask Research Minute videos have been created and published.

Created **30+** pitches for USask scholars and established an institutional "expert list" for timely media access.

Engaged over **1,000** subscribers via the USask's monthly Discovery Digest newsletter.

Acquired **462** new followers to the OVPR LinkedIn account without any budgetary investment in content or marketing.

55% was the average open rate for Discovery Digest research newsletters, compared to an industry average of 25%.

USask researchers authored **20** news articles and opinion pieces.

Received **92** entries via the eight annual Images of Research Competition.

Over **2,000** public votes were cast in the viewer's choice category for Images of Research, and images were viewed over **13,000** times online.

152 people registered for the first three *How To Tell Your Research Story* learning sessions that launched in February 2022.



International Office

The International Office (IO) plays a pivotal role in advancing the university's internationalization goals, as well as supporting international research and partnership activities across the institution.

IO administers several programs, services, and supports for faculty, staff, students, and external partners, including:

- Partnership development: assisting with agreement preparation, facilitating review and renewal of agreements, identifying partnership opportunities, and making connections.
- Delegation Management: liaising with government officials and other agencies, and coordinating arrangements before, during, and after visits.
- International Research: facilitation of international research proposals and due diligence processes.

Research for Global Impact, Local Relevance

The past academic year has been a remarkable year for international research achievements despite the continuation of a global pandemic. In 2021-22:

- USask generated \$27,532,168 in external funding to support international research and development activities. This represents a 75.1% increase from when USask launched its International Blueprint in 2017-18.
- IO facilitated the development of 31 international projects with Global South partners in 17 countries.
- USask reached a new all-time high record of receiving \$2.8 million in international development funding. This represents a 297% increase from 2017-18.

Mobilizing Action Through Research Funding

IO has shared approximately 720 potential funding opportunities with university scholars to drive research growth and discovery. Highlights of successfully funded internal and external projects in 2021-22 include:

Notable Projects Funded Externally

1. A team of hydrologists from the University of Saskatchewan (USask) and University of Calgary (UCalgary) comprises the Canadian contingent in an unprecedented international collaboration that aims to revolutionize flood predictions and transform water predictions across North America.
2. The College of Arts and Science and College of Agriculture and Bioresources have been awarded a total of almost \$950,000 through the Government of Canada's Global Skills Opportunity (GSO) program. The Pilot phase GSO project builds on the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) model to accelerate inter-cultural competence development on campus, and facilitated by the IO, our USask experiences and resources have been shared with Saskatchewan institutions and GSO network members across Canada.
3. Dr. Carol Henry (PhD) of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) is the lead researcher of an international team awarded \$100,000 from the Templeton World Charity Foundation for work aimed at seeing young women on two continents thrive.
3. Investigate the feasibility of a stochastic ice-jam flood forecasting system for the Kuskokwim River, Alaska. Progress has been made in acquiring surveyed cross-sections of the Kuskokwim River in Alaska. This data stems from Donlin Gold LLC, a mining company in Alaska with a gold deposit owned by Indigenous Alaska Native landowners. The experience gained during this project helped secure funding from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, a project which looked into using a similar modelling system, as the one being applied to the Kuskokwim River, to explore ice-jam flood mitigation options for the town of Fort McMurray. Dr. Karl Lindenschmidt, Global Innovation Fund (United States)

Notable Projects Funded Internally

1. A project team provided nutrition and gardening training for families involved in Chicken raising training program. Monthly training sessions on nutrition, food security and meal planning, as well as baseline surveys on income and food security of participant families have been set up. Results have been sent to USask College of Medicine for statistical analysis. Dr. Ron Siemens, Global Community Service Fund (Mozambique)
2. Building a Community of Practice for the TRANSECTS Research Training Partnership (TRANSdisciplinary Education and Collaboration for Transformations in Sustainability). This funding provided an opportunity to enhance capacity of all partners to learn from one another and build a community of practice across geography, culture, and different ways of learning and doing. This Global Community Service Fund internal grant was leveraged to support tri-agency SSHRC Research Training Partnership Grant; stage 1 was awarded in July 2021, stage 2 award decision pending (\$2.5M request from SSHRC). Dr. Maureen Reed, Global Community Service Fund (multi-country).
4. Global Indigenous Health: Wahkotowina e Osihtahk/Creating Relationships for Indigenous land-based healing. Research retreat entitled "Land-Based Healing Across the Waters" focused on identifying pressing concerns regarding land-based healing research in communities, innovative research approaches, and nurturing research collaborations. Our delegation met with the team from Waipā Foundation whose mission is to restore the natural land-based systems of the Waipā region while inspiring healthy and thriving communities through connection with land-based resources. Dr. Katie Collins, Global Innovation Fund (US & New Zealand)

Strategic Investments through the International Blueprint for Action 2025

In 2021-22, IO leveraged and invested funding via USask's International Blueprint for Action 2025 for various reasons:

- Supporting the development and dissemination of a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) Intercultural perception survey to gather

student perspectives on their virtual mobility experience. The response rate was 60/100 and data indicated that there was an increase in student confidence when working with different cultures, an overall increase in awareness, and an enthusiasm to learn more about intercultural education.

- 13 nominations packages were received for the 2021/2022 Internationalization Awards.
- 17 Travel grants (77% success rate) were awarded to faculty to support projects in physics and engineering, veterinary biomedical sciences, crop development, archeology and anthropology, nutrition, environment and sustainability, art and history, pharmacy, agricultural economics, water security, curriculum studies, and educational administration.
- 9 Project grants (success rate 69%) were awarded to faculty to address global challenges in areas of environment and sustainability, dentistry, pharmacy, anatomy physiology and pharmacology, educational administration, geography and planning, food security, and veterinary microbiology.
- 23 Countries were supported by our Project and Travel grants (North America: United States; Central and South America: Argentina; Europe: Germany, Greece, United Kingdom; Asia: China, South Korea, India, Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Japan. Middle East: Israel; Africa: South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Tanzania, Ghana. Oceania: New Zealand, Timor Leste).

Academic Partnerships

In 2021-22, IO managed 409 active international agreements with more than 360 entities in over 60 countries on behalf of USask. This includes 39 new and 13 renewed agreements over the past academic year.

Over the past academic year, IO also facilitated over 100 exploratory partnership discussions with stakeholders from more than 30 countries. Notable aspects include:

- Top partnering countries with active international agreements (active agreements): China (57), Japan

(37), India (27), Germany (17), Brazil (14), Mexico (14), and South Korea (14).

- Top partnering countries with active student mobility agreements (active agreements): China (20), Japan (14), Germany (8), Finland (7), Brazil (6) and Norway (6).

In 2021-22, IO formalized partnerships with two highly ranked universities in the world - the National Tsing Hua University (QS #180; THE #351-400) in Taiwan and Sungkyunkwan University (QS #97; THE 122) in South Korea.

Visiting Professors and Visiting Research Students

Despite many international travel restrictions, visiting research students continued to be accepted to USask in 2021-22. IO supported mobility of the following:

- Visiting Professors (VPs): 19 professors from 10 countries were accepted to arrive. The top two countries were Iran (5) and China (4).
- Visiting Research Students (VRSs): 106 students (both undergraduate and graduate) from 24 countries were accepted as VRSs. The top six countries were China (30), India (15), United States (10), Iran (10), Germany (8) and Brazil (8).

Government Engagement

IO represents USask, alongside representatives from other post-secondary institutions in the province, in regular discussions with the province's Ministry of Advanced Education on topics related to internationalization.

In 2021-22, IO has had over 150 meetings with the Ministry of Advanced Education on topics related to the 5-year Saskatchewan International Education Strategy, the International Research Engagement framework for Saskatchewan, the International Student Ambassador program, international relations and mobility, and international research, development, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Also in 2021-22, on a federal level, IO has had over 25 meetings with the Canadian government and over 20 meetings with foreign governments overseas. A total of 37 international briefings and speaking notes (19

for government, 18 for senior leaders) were created covering a breadth of topics in different countries and for a variety of initiatives.

In 2021-22, IO also coordinated several incoming visits and overseas missions over the past academic year, including a USask mission with the Premier to the United Kingdom, USask mission to Mexico and Yucatan with the Minister of Advanced Education; USask mission to United Arab Emirates with the Premier, and USask mission to Germany arranged by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

International-Focused Events

In 2021-22, IO organized events at many levels to support the internationalization of USask. Notable examples include:

- People Around the World 2022 conference partnered with the 27th National Congress on Rural Education in Canada for the very first time to broadly engage countries, government, educators, school and system leaders, parents, community members, and researchers to highlight global perspectives on rural and remote education and sustainability research. There were 139 conference attendees, 35 presenters (65% of which were international).
- Launch of a new campus “Country Conversations” initiative to promote campus internationalization.
- Organized or participated in several international MOU signing ceremonies, including events between USask and IT Ropar which included a research round table, with over 60 faculty and staff members from both institutions; USask and top-ranked German institutions (Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research and Friedrich-Loeffler-Institut), with presence of USask President and USask Vice-President Research, Ministry of Advanced Education, DAAD and embassies representing both countries; and USask and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu with presence of USask AVP Research.
- Organized an international event for the province in partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education on the SDGs to highlight “Local Action, Global Impact – Building awareness on the UN SDGs in Saskatchewan’s Postsecondary Education”.

Highlights by the Numbers:

\$27,532,168 generated in external funding to support international research and development activities.

Received **\$2.8 M** in international development funding, an all-time-high for USask.

720 international funding opportunities shared and promoted to USask scholars.

17 international travel grants (77% success rate) awarded to faculty.

9 international project grants (success rate 69%) were awarded to faculty.

409 active international agreements managed with more than **360** entities in over **60** countries on behalf of USask.

Top **3** partnering countries with active international agreements:

China (57)

Japan (37)

India (27)

Facilitated **100+** exploratory partnership discussions with stakeholders from more than **30** countries.

Supported mobility of **9** visiting professors from **10** countries.

Supported mobility of **106** visiting research students from **24** countries.

139 attendees and **35** presenters at the People Around the World Conference 2022.

