

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
PLANNING AND PRIORITIES COMMITTEE &  
RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY AND ARTISTIC WORKS COMMITTEE  
REPORT FOR INFORMATION**

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**PRESENTED BY:** Darrell Mousseau, Chair, Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC)

**DATE OF MEETING:** October 21, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Renewal of the Signature Areas of Research

**COUNCIL ACTION:** For Information Only

**SUMMARY:**

This item serves to update Council on the renewal of the University of Saskatchewan's Signature Areas of Research. Dr. Baljit Singh, Vice President Research, attended the Research, Scholarly and Artistic Works Committee on September 9, 2021, and PPC on October 7, 2021, to update the committees on the renewal process.

Dr. Singh will provide a presentation to Council on October 21, 2021, on the Research Signature Areas renewal, as attached.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Research Signature Areas Renewal Process - PPT

# Signature Areas Renewal Process

Baljit Singh, FCAHS, BVSc&AH, PhD

6 October, 2021

# Our Mission

The University of Saskatchewan advances the aspirations of the people of the province and beyond through **interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to discovering, teaching, sharing, integrating, preserving, and applying knowledge, including the creative arts, to build a rich cultural community.** An innovative, accessible, and welcoming place for students, educators, and researchers from around the world, we serve the public good by connecting discovery, teaching, and outreach, by promoting diversity and meaningful change, and by preparing students for enriching careers and fulfilling lives as engaged global citizens.

## Our vision

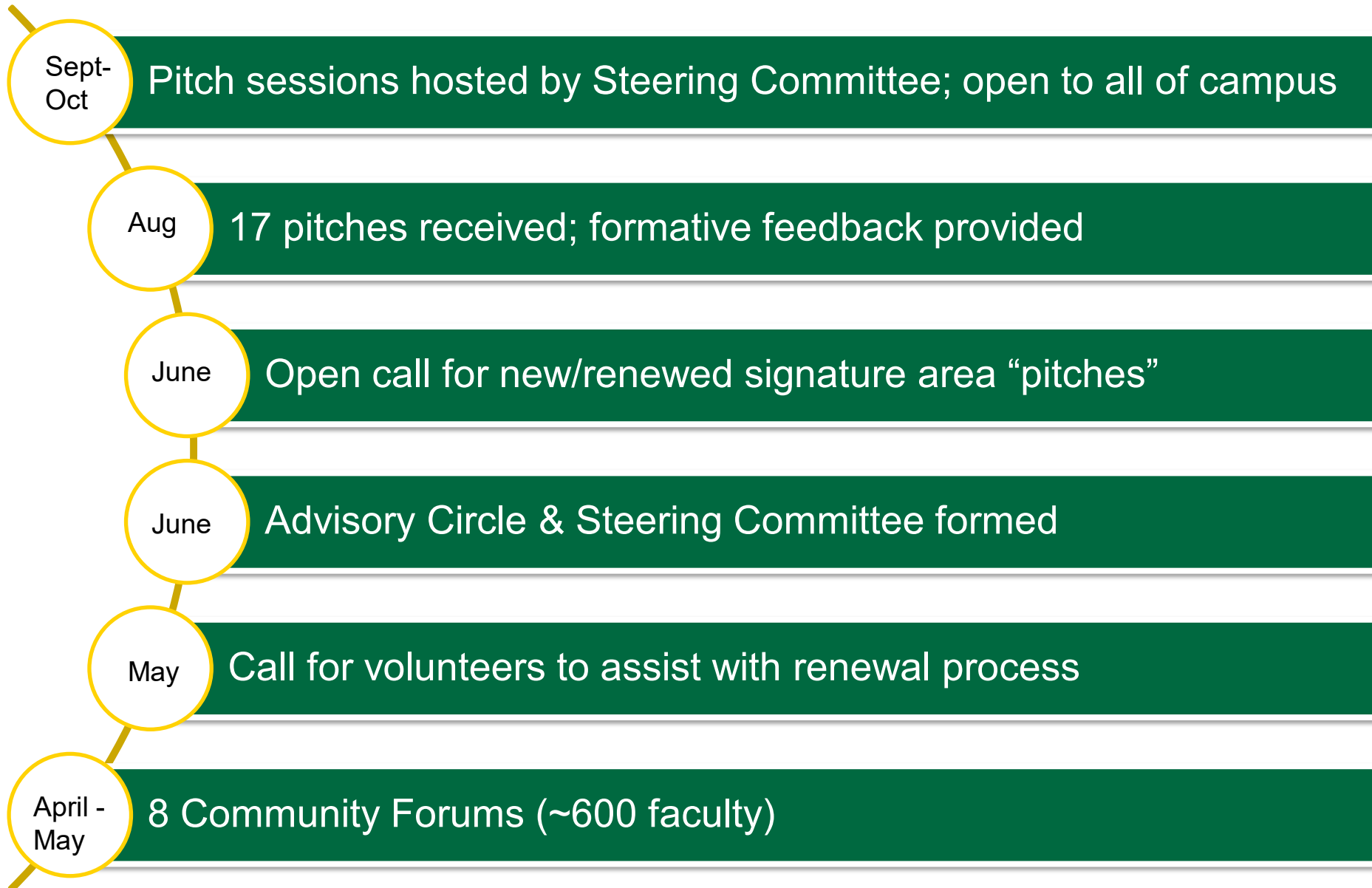
*We will contribute to a sustainable future by **being among the best in the world in areas of special and emerging strengths, through outstanding research, scholarly and artistic work** that addresses the needs and aspirations of our region and the world, and through exceptional teaching and engagement.*

*We will be an outstanding institution of research, learning, knowledge-keeping, reconciliation, and inclusion with and by Indigenous peoples and communities.*

## Signature Areas Background

- 2002: *“Renewing the Dream”*
- 2008: USask research strategy which included “Focus” as one of its five pillars
- 2010: Identified six signature areas in which we could be a global leader
- 2020: Vice-President Research Chad wrote *“Reflecting on our Signature Areas of Research”*
- 2021: Renewal process begins with the following intents:
  - Embody transparency, collaboration and open communication at all levels
  - Share any new idea (pitches) for signature areas across the academy
  - Balance engagement of Council and its committees in meaningful ways while also allowing the VPR oversight of the research enterprise
  - Result in renewed signature areas of research, operationalized in practical and effective ways

## Signature Area Renewal Process (at a glance)





## Signature Areas Advisory Circle

- The Advisory Circle was asked to make recommendations on:
  - An institutional definition and statement of purpose for signature areas
  - Articulation of criteria for establishing, renewing, or disestablishing signature areas
  - A current state assessment of signature areas based on findings from engagements in May 2021
  - Identification of critical actions and factors needed to ensure long-term success of signature areas
- Terms of reference and summary report posted on OVPR website in July 2021
- Please review the report [https://vpresearch.usask.ca/documents/initiatives/sa-renewal/sa-ac\\_final-report\\_july-30\\_2021.pdf](https://vpresearch.usask.ca/documents/initiatives/sa-renewal/sa-ac_final-report_july-30_2021.pdf)

## Signature Areas Steering Committee

- A Steering Committee formed to review recommendations of the Circle and decide on key areas:
  - Any changes to the current existing 6 signature areas
  - Addition of new signature areas, based on the “pitch your ideas” sessions
  - Resource allocation methodology for the signature areas
  - Leadership structure for the individual signature areas
  - Annual reporting framework
  - Other priority decisions to ensure long-term success and vitality of the university’s signature areas.
- Terms of reference were posted on OVPR website in August 2021:  
<https://vpresearch.usask.ca/initiatives/signature-areas-renewal.php>
- Work is underway, expected completion December 2021.



## Pitch Your Ideas: 17 Pitches Originally Received

- Healthy Saskatchewan, Healthy World: Origins of Wellness and Disease
- Analytics: Leveraging Data for Innovation and Impact
- Arts & Wellbeing
- Climate Change, Health & Care
- **Communities\***
- Energy Security
- Household Change & Population Growth
- Storytelling & Knowledge
- Stewardship of Nuclear Research for Training & Development

- Social Responsibility & Social and Environmental Justice
- Publicly Engaged Scholarship
- Population & Public Health
- Quantum Innovation
- Science & Society
- Smart Sensors
- **Sustainability\***
- Water, Healthy, Equity, Access, Security, and Sustainability of Freshwater Resources

## Criteria

- Focus
- Transcending Boundaries & Structures: Connecting Approaches for Innovative Solutions
- Research, Scholarly and Artistic Strength
- Indigenization
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Meaningful Impact
- Sustainability

## Next Steps

- Through October-November, the Signature Areas Steering Committee will:
  - Adjudicate the pitches based on their own rankings as well as feedback received from USask community
  - Make recommendations on new or revised signature areas to the VPR & Provost
  - Decide on key aspects of the “operationalization” of signature areas
- VPR will continue with transparency and collaboration, reporting to campus community, University Council and its committees
- A review process for current signature areas will be established and begun in 2023-24

- Questions

