

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships (JCCP)
REQUEST FOR DECISION

PRESENTED BY: Scott Walsworth, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships (JCCP)

DATE OF MEETING: November 21, 2024

SUBJECT: Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission Applied Genomics and Pre-breeding Chair

DECISION REQUESTED: It is recommended by the Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships that University Council approve the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission Applied Genomics and Pre-breeding Chair in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources within the Crop Development Centre and Department of Plant Sciences.

PURPOSE: Primarily focused on wheat, the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission Applied Genomics Pre-breeding Chair will expand the cereal research breeding and training activities in the Crop Development Centre (CDC) with the goal of increasing the speed of varietal development for wheat and other cereals (barley, oat, canary seed) to more effectively improve crop performance through the implementation of applied genomics and pre-breeding strategies.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: The creation of the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission Applied Genomics Pre-breeding Chair has been discussed with, and endorsed by, the donor, the Office of the Vice President Research, and the Office of the Vice President University Relations.

FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED: With approval of the University Council and subsequently approval of Board of Governors, the terms of reference will be implemented immediately.

ATTACHMENT: Terms of reference for the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission Applied Genomics and Pre-breeding Chair in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources within the Crop Development Centre and Department of Plant Sciences.



**Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission
Applied Genomics and Pre-breeding Chair
Terms of Reference**

Purpose:

To establish a continuing status faculty position at the College of Agriculture and Bioresources within the Crop Development Centre and Department of Plant Sciences to expand the crop breeding and training capacity for wheat.

The invested trust will be used to support the salary and benefit costs associated with the faculty position as well as one technical position to support the activities of the Chairholder.

Objectives of Chair:

Primarily focused on wheat, the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission Applied Genomics Pre-breeding Chair will expand the cereal research breeding and training activities in the Crop Development Centre (CDC) with the goal of increasing the speed of varietal development for wheat and other cereals (barley, oat, canary seed) to more effectively improve crop performance through the implementation of applied genomics and pre-breeding strategies.

This Faculty position will focus on the following main objectives:

- Applying a combination of genomics techniques and data science methods to large collections of germplasm to identify target traits that are useful and have potential in breeding programs.
- Research, develop, and deploy cutting-edge genomic/phenotypic selection strategies and trait introgression (crossing/gene editing) with the specific aim to access the necessary variation to improve varietal performance.
- Design strategies to modulate recombination and/or use gene editing and functional genomic strategies to eliminate the incidental introduction of deleterious/undesirable traits (linkage drag) associated with traditional breeding approaches.
- The focus of research will be on wheat (at least 90% of activities), and other cereal crops (barley, oat, canary seed; up to 10% of activities). We anticipate the position to target pre-breeding activities related to disease and pest resistance and climate resiliency. The attention to disease resistance has the added benefit of increasing pathology support at the CDC.

- It is expected that the objectives will evolve over time with advances in technologies and breeding practices. Review of these objectives will occur every five years and changes will be captured in Guidelines and form an Appendix to the Terms of Reference.

Accountability: All terms of reference must align with the *Guidelines for Chairs and Professorships*.

Chair Type: This will be a continuing status Chair.

Background: The Chair was conceived to address a current bottleneck in the CDC that exists at the pre-breeding (germplasm development) stage. There is a growing concern across the country that there is a lack of expertise in pre-breeding, particularly in wheat.

Source and Amount of Funding: The Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission will make a contribution of \$6,500,000 to support this Chair. The contribution will be received over a period of two years as follows:

- \$3,250,000 on or before December 31, 2024
- \$3,250,000 on or before August 1, 2025

Tenability: Both principal and earnings will be available for use. It is anticipated that the funds will be utilized over a period of approximately 30 years.

The funding is anticipated to support the costs (salary and benefits) of the Chairholder as well as those of a single technical support position for a period equivalent to one career term (approximately 30 years). The life of the trust will depend on investment returns and cumulative costs. If the tenability of the two career term positions becomes in doubt, then funding for the Chair would be prioritized over the technical position to maximize the life of the Chair such that a career term target for the Chair may be achieved through the invested trust.

The tenability of the term will be reviewed should a Chairholder no longer hold the appointment and in advance of seeking a new incumbent. The Management Committee may recommend changes to the term of the Chair, subject to agreement of the JCCP co-chairs with formal notification provided to JCCP.

Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission will be entitled to, at its absolute discretion, add amounts to the funding provided under this agreement.

Search Committee:

There shall be a Search Committee established in each department and non-departmentalized College. The Chair of the Committee and the Committee membership is determined by the relevant terms in Article 13 of the collective agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association.

Subject to the requirements of the collective agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the Faculty Association, the Contributor (or designate) will be invited to join the search subcommittee.

Chairholder responsibilities:

The Chairholder will be responsible for expanding and complementing the breeding capacity of the Crop Development Centre by developing a comprehensive pre-breeding and applied genomics selection program in wheat and other cereal crops. Additionally, the Chairholder should bring expertise to support selection of traits valuable in resistance to diseases, heat stress, and drought tolerance to support climate resiliency.

The Chairholder will:

- provide visionary leadership to advance the CDC's breeding capacity in cereals through the development and implementation of pre-breeding methods and applied genomics techniques.
- attract appropriate research funding to support applied genomics/pre-breeding activities at the CDC.
- participate in teaching at the graduate and undergraduate level with a commitment of 4.5 CU of teaching per year, on average.
- provide mentorship and supervision of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows in their research and studies.
- be a liaison with external stakeholders including producers to support and align with provincial core breeding strategies and activities.
- provide an annual report to and review workplans with the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission.

The holder of the Chair will submit reports and/or a lay summary of scholarly and financial activities in accordance with university practices to the Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources and the Head of the Department of Plant Sciences. The reports will outline accomplishments of the Chairholder in keeping with the Chair's purpose and objectives.

Term of Chair: The Chairholder will be appointed into a continuing-status-track position. The continuation of the Chair will be dependent on sufficient funding for the Chair, ensuring the Chairholder maintains a continuing status appointment, and that the Chairholder obtains satisfactory reviews.

Vacancies: Any vacancies in the Chair will be addressed according to the procedures related to the type of vacancy as outlined in the Guidelines for Chairs and Professorships.

Review: The Chairholder's scholarly progression must be reviewed at least biennially.

A financial review must occur annually.

Management Committee: The Management Committee will consist of the Dean, Agriculture and Bioresources, the Department Head of Plant Sciences, the Director of the CDC, and the appropriate financial officer (or designate). Others may be included on the management committee if deemed beneficial in achieving the objectives of the Chair.

A representative from the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission will be invited to sit on the Management Committee. That representative will be permitted to share all of the information and documents they receive through their participation on the Management Committee with Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission including for the purposes of reporting to its board of directors, provided that those reports, information and documents will be held in confidence by Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission.

Management responsibilities shall include the following:

1. Oversee the activities of the Chair or Professorship;
2. Review and update objectives of chair while ensuring adherence to the original purpose;
3. Oversee management of the fund to ensure compliance with the terms of the trust deed and the on-going financial integrity of the initiative;
4. Approve annual budgets;
5. Receive annual financial statements of the trust fund, and, at least annually, a projection of the anticipated life of the fund;
6. Receive and review, at least annually, a report from the Chairholder on the progress and provide guidance on achieving the objectives of the Chair as set out in these terms of reference;
7. Receive and review the biennial scholarly report, the

annual financial report and the final report on the activities of the Chairholder; and

8. Provide a copy of the required scholarly, financial, and final reports to the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships.

Removal of Chairholder:

Any allegations related to a breach of one or more of the University policies made against a Chairholder should follow appropriate university policies and procedures related to the nature of the breach. This includes, but is not limited to, policies related to research, financial stewardship, and/or employment. Should the appropriate process conclude and determine that the Chairholder has breached a University Policy or failed to meet an expectation as a faculty member, the provost and vice president academic and vice president research will determine appropriate measures regarding the continuation of the Chairholder which may include termination from the Chair. The final determination will be communicated to the Chairholder, the Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources and the Chair of the Management Committee.

Disestablishment of Chair:

Once the invested trust has been diminished so that it is no longer practical to fund the chair, the Chairholder position will be terminated in accordance with the obligations of the Collective Agreement between the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association, and Section 7 of the *Guidelines for Chairs and Professorships* for the Disestablishment of a Chair.

Eligible Expenditures:

The trust will be used to support the salary and benefits of the Chairholder as well as a technical support position. Research project funding will not be supported by the trust.

Expenditures will be in alignment with Section 2.0 of the *Guidelines for the Establishment of Chairs and Professorships*, and will relate to the budget for the Chair (attached).

Unspent Funds:

At such time that the Chair ceases to be in existence, the university will consult with the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission to determine an agreeable alternate use for the unspent funding that is in keeping with the original spirit and intent of the contribution.

Insufficient Funds:

The trust fund is expected to cover the eligible costs of the Chair until its disestablishment. However, should there be insufficient funds to cover the costs associated with the Chair, the excess cost will be covered by the Crop Development Centre, per the terms outlined under *Tenability*.

Fund Administration:

The University shall have the power to administer the fund as part of the University's general trust and endowment funds, in keeping with and under the University's investment and administrative guidelines and practices as may be established and changed from time to time. At the date of this agreement, and under the above guidelines and practices, provision shall be made for the investment of trust funds in common with other trust funds and the payment of administration fees with respect to the management of trust funds, such fees to be determined by the University acting reasonably.

Successors:

Should any corporate changes impact the fund in name or structure of the organization, the terms of reference will be edited to reflect those changes.

In the event that circumstances make the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission Applied Genomics and Pre-breeding Chair unable to feasibly pursue the objectives, the Management Committee, in consultation with Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, will recommend to University Council and the Board of Governors of the University of Saskatchewan, changes to the Chair. These recommendations will maintain, as much as is reasonably possible, the Chair's spirit and general intent as identified in its statement of Purpose.

The creation of this Chair is subject to approval of both University of Saskatchewan Council and University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors.

[Signature page follows]


It is hereby acknowledged that these terms of reference are acceptable and are in keeping with the intent of the gift.

Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission

Per: _____
Blair Goldade Date
Executive Director

Per: _____
Jake Leguee Date
Chair of the Board of Directors

The College of Agriculture and Bioresources recommends acceptance based on the above terms.



Angela Bedard-Haughn, PhD, PAg Date
Dean and Professor, College of Agriculture
and Bioresources
November 8, 2024

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations recommends acceptance based on the above terms.

Scott Walsworth, PhD Date
Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations

The Office of the Vice President, Research recommends acceptance based on the above terms.

Dawn Wallin, PhD Date
Associate Vice President, Research

Approved and accepted on behalf of the Board of Governors of the University of Saskatchewan.

Cheryl Hamelin Date
Vice-President, University Relations