



Provost's Report to Council

October 2025

GENERAL REMARKS AND CURRENT ISSUES

This is my first report to University Council as Interim Provost and Vice-President Academic (PVPA). I am both honoured and energized to be serving in this role and grateful to work with and through University Council and its committees. Each report that comes to University Council highlights activities and accomplishments from across academic and support centres within the PVPA portfolio.

As was the case last year, USask continues to experience the negative impact of policy changes made by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). We are projecting the loss of an additional 500 international students in 2025-26. This now includes both the loss of undergraduate students and graduate students. These enrolment changes directly impact the financial picture and represent a loss of opportunity for the university and the province in the areas of research and student experience. Wherever it is possible to have these conversations, I will continue to be very clear about the fulsome contributions that international students and their families make to USask and why it is imperative that Canada rebuild its reputation as a desirable study destination.

In the months ahead, the CFO Deidre Henne and I will attend town halls hosted by deans and executive directors within colleges and schools so that we can connect directly with people about leading through a changing financial landscape. As one element of the financial picture, anyone interested in more detailed information on enrolment can access the enrolment dashboard. The most recent snapshot highlighting fall census data can be found [here](#). Despite the loss of international students, domestic enrolment at USask remains strong. Work is underway by the Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Steering Committee, now chaired by Acting Deputy Provost Loleen Berdahl, to develop the next SEM Plan. Members of University Council and members of council committees can anticipate being engaged in this development in the new year.

USASK UPDATES

USASK DEPUTY PROVOST AND JS GS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROLES

The University of Saskatchewan is pleased to share two important leadership updates. Dr. Loleen Berdahl (PhD) has been appointed acting deputy provost, effective October 1, 2025. This appointment reflects her outstanding record of scholarship, leadership, and service. Dr. Berdahl most recently served as Executive Director of the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS) and Director of the Diefenbaker Canada Centre. She is a nationally recognized educator and leader, known for her work in teaching, academic leadership, and equity, diversity and inclusion and her deep commitment to advancing Canadian higher education. Her accolades include the 3M National Teaching Fellowship and the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Teaching.

As Dr. Berdahl transitions to the role of acting deputy provost, Dr. Martha Smith (PhD) will step into the role of acting executive director of JSGS for a nine-month term. A professor of history at USask, Dr. Smith brings extensive leadership experience from previous roles as interim and acting associate dean in the USask College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and is a respected scholar of American foreign policy and Cold War history. She has contributed greatly to graduate education through policy development, supervision, and mentorship, and to the city of Saskatoon through volunteer roles with community outreach organization, OUTSaskatoon. Please join the USask community in congratulating Dr. Berdahl and Dr. Smith on their new roles.

COLLEGE UPDATES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

A selection of recent accomplishments, achievements and milestones for USask's college and school community are shared below.

INTRODUCTORY AGRICULTURE CERTIFICATE

The USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources has announced the **Introductory Agriculture certificate**. This certificate program can be taken concurrently with a degree or diploma program or taken as a standalone program. The certificate provides a base knowledge of agriculture in the Canadian Prairie region. Students will learn key competencies in the field of agriculture, diverse ways of knowing, agrology and professional practice in agriculture, the scientific principles that govern agriculture and the environment, and the socio-economic impacts of agriculture. The target audience for the new certificate includes educators who want to deliver science-based agriculture programs in primary and secondary schools, individuals seeking entry-level, non-professional

agriculture employment, and new and current USask undergraduate students. It provides students from different academic disciplines, such as business or engineering, a competitive edge by expanding their scope for future careers.

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS UPDATE

Edwards Executive Education was once again **recognized by the *Financial Times*** as one of the world's top executive education providers, marking its second consecutive year on the prestigious list and solidifying its place among the global elite in professional development and leadership training. This recognition reflects Edwards commitment to delivering relevant, high-impact learning experiences that meet the evolving needs of professionals and organizations. Looking ahead, **Edwards Executive Education** is excited to continue expanding offerings, developing new programs, and strengthening partnerships. Congratulations to the Edwards School of Business on this achievement!

Jack Vicq, professor emeritus and distinguished University of Saskatchewan alumnus, has been inducted as one of the **2025 Leaders of the Profession from the Canadian Accounting Hall of Fame (CAHF)**. This prestigious honour celebrates individuals whose work has significantly shaped the accounting profession in Canada or advanced its development internationally. **CAHF recognizes excellence** across a wide spectrum of practice, including assurance, financial reporting, management accounting, taxation, corporate governance and consultancy, as well as through leadership in professional organizations, regulatory bodies and academic contributions. Vicq's career reflects visionary leadership, civic responsibility and a deep belief in inclusive education. His legacy continues to shape the accounting profession and inspire future generations. Congratulations to Jack Vicq on this outstanding achievement!

DIEFENBAKER CANADA CENTRE CELEBRATES CANADIAN CO-OPERATIVES

The Diefenbaker Canada Centre in partnership with the Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives at USask are marking the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives 2025 with an original exhibition, *Community Powered: Celebrating Canadian Co-operatives*. Designed in collaboration with the vibrant co-op sector, the exhibition invites visitors to explore co-operative values and principles, co-operatives in action, Indigenous co-operatives and decolonization, and co-operative history through art, research, education, and archives—encouraging them to reflect on the impact of co-operatives across Canada and around the world. [**Learn more.**](#)

USASK LIBRARY INDIGENOUS STORYTELLER IN RESIDENCE

This Indigenous Storyteller in Residence program began in 2021 to support the University Library's goal to be an open and inclusive environment that respects and uplifts Indigenous voices and perspectives. Each year, the Indigenous Storyteller in Residence is a member of the University Library and is involved in creating and participating in opportunities to promote intercultural understanding and story-sharing between and among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The residency culminates in a presentation of a project during the university's Indigenous Achievement Week. The Library is now seeking [expressions of interest for the 2026 storyteller.](#)

USASK LIBRARY JOURNAL HOSTING SERVICE

The University Library now offers a journal hosting service for diamond open access journals affiliated with USask, using the Open Journal Systems (OJS) platform. Current hosted journals include the [University of Saskatchewan Undergraduate Research Journal](#), the [John Donne Journal](#), and the [Engaged Scholar Journal](#).

SASKATCHEWAN BUILDS FUTURE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT WORKFORCE

USask is taking another step forward in strengthening its health-care workforce with the launch of a new training program for Physician Assistants (PAs). Twenty new students have joined the USask College of Medicine as the first cohort of the new Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program. This milestone is a bold step in Saskatchewan's plan to recruit and retain PAs right here at home with USask taking the lead on the training element of the plan. PAs are health professionals who have taken advanced training to practise medicine under the supervision of a licensed physician, often within a multidisciplinary health team. The Government of Saskatchewan is making a significant financial investment into the two-year MPAS program. Admissions to USask's MPAS program were competitive, with 340 applicants for 20 available seats. Fifteen students are from Saskatchewan, representing 75 per cent of the class.

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Gill White has been appointed interim Vice-Dean, Education, College of Medicine, for a term of up to one year, beginning September 1, 2025.

Dr. Sven Achenbach has been extended as interim Associate Dean, Faculty Relations, College of Engineering, for a term of up to ten months beginning September 1, 2025.

Dr. Michael Szafron has been appointed acting Assistant Executive Director, School of Public Health, for a term of up to six months beginning September 1, 2025 and up to February 28, 2026.

Dr. Steven Rayan has been appointed interim vice-dean, Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work, College of Arts & Science, for a term of up to one-year effective July 1, 2025.

Dr. David Blackburn has been appointed a second term as Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Affairs, College of Pharmacy & Nutrition, for a term of up to five years beginning July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2030.

Dr. George Keyworth has been appointed as Department Head, History, College of Arts & Science, for a term of up to three years effective July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2028.

Dr. Meredith McKague has been appointed as Associate Dean, UGME, College of Medicine, for a term of up to five years beginning July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2030.

Active Searches & Reviews

We are in the early stages of the following searches and reviews (full committees still being populated):

Searches:

- Executive Director, Johnson Shoyama
- Dean, College Pharmacy and Nutrition
- Dean, College of Law

Reviews:

- Dean, College of Nursing
- Dean, Western College of Veterinary Medicine

Please see [here](#) for information on searches and reviews.