

REQUEST FOR DECISION

Committee Name: Planning and Priorities Committee, University Council

Date: September 25, 2025

Presented by: Christian Willenborg, Chair, Planning and Priorities Committee

Subject: Business Research Integration and Development Group (BRIDGE) Knowledge Centre

MOTION

It is recommended by the Planning and Priorities Committee that Council approve the establishment of the Business Research Integration and Development Group (BRIDGE) Knowledge Centre effective immediately.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Dr. Keith Willoughby, Dean of the Edwards School of Business, Craig Wilson, Acting Associate Dean of Research, Graduate Programs, and Faculty Relations and Joelena Leader, Managing Director of BRIDGE Knowledge Centre joined the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) on September 10, 2025 to revisit the BRIDGE Centre proposal.

BRIDGE plays a key role in formalizing and strengthening connections between the university and the business community, acting as a connector that complements the work of existing centres. Its structured governance provides credibility and continuity, which resonates well with stakeholders. The centre also serves as a platform to support the development of a potential doctoral program by linking students directly with industry partners. With a growing demand for community engagement, the centre has hosted initiatives like the first Prairie Business Summit and facilitated numerous interactions with external partners. Its flagship programming offers unique value to USask, and it continues to evolve by incorporating community voices, such as the recent decision to include a member from community living on its Advisory Council.

CONSULTATION

BRIDGE received provisional status from PPC in June of 2023 with the request from the PPC Centres Subcommittee to identify the need for a formal centre conducting this work, value-add with existing research centres and administrative units as well as clarification on the focus of the centre (local, provincial, national, etc.). On May 29th, 2025, the proposal for BRIDGE to receive full centre status was reviewed. The Subcommittee felt that their initial questions were addressed. On June 11, 2025, the BRIDGE proposal came forward to PPC requesting:

- A detailed comparison of BRIDGE and the Centre for Entrepreneurship. This comparison should clearly outline the unique and overlapping functions of each centre, as well as the distinct roles they will play.
- A comprehensive budget and funding plan for the proposed centre, demonstrating a clear commitment to financial support in accordance with the Centres Policy
- How this centre connects to the work with Opus.

A revised BRIDGE proposal was reviewed by PPC on September 10, 2025, where members voted in favour of the formal establishment of the BRIDGE Centre.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **BRIDGE Centre Proposal**

BRIDGE KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

Full Centre Proposal

Full centre proposal prepared for the Planning and Priorities
Committee (PPC)

Prepared by Dr. Joelena Leader, Assistant Professor of Management and Managing Director
of the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre, Edwards School of Business

September 2025 PPC Meeting

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APPLICATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FULL CENTRE

Executive Summary

The **BRIDGE Knowledge Centre** (Business Research Integration and Development Group at Edwards) at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) is seeking full centre status following its successful provisional phase. Housed in the Edwards School of Business, BRIDGE serves as a campus-wide hub for **applied business research, knowledge translation, and industry-community-academic engagement**.

With its mission to **strengthen connections**, BRIDGE fills a critical gap at USask by providing a formal structure dedicated to connecting academic research with business and community practice. Core to its mission is to strengthen partnerships that translate academic insights into real-world impact. Its vision is to become a nationally and internationally **recognized leader in responsible and impactful business research**.

Key activities include:

- A **Research Knowledge Portal** to connect researchers and external partners and showcase translated research.
- The **Prairie Business Summit**, a biennial flagship event convening over 350 stakeholders.
- The **BRIDGE Exchange Series**, smaller events sustaining momentum between summits.
- **Graduate and postdoctoral research opportunities**, including targeted postdoc funding.
- **Industry-partnered research projects** aligned with real-world needs.
- **Knowledge translation tools** such as reports, toolkits, and briefs.

The Centre has demonstrated demand and value through consultations with business leaders, academic units, and community partners. It complements, and avoids duplicating, other centres like OPUS and the Centre for Entrepreneurship, focusing instead on applied research engagement, knowledge translation and project development rather than commercialization or student startups.

BRIDGE operates with lean staffing and strong governance through a Managing Committee and Advisory Council. It is supported by a blended revenue model including institutional funding, donor contributions, grants, event revenue, and fee-for-service activities. A detailed five-year budget plan (Appendix B) demonstrates confirmed support from the Dean and the Brownlee Family Foundation alongside projected revenues from events, sponsorships, and grants, ensuring both sustainability and growth. Early success includes postdoc funding from the Dean and donor support for core personnel and events.

Full centre status will enable BRIDGE to expand its role in:

- Developing strategic partnerships
- Attracting and managing external funding
- Delivering high-impact, interdisciplinary research and outreach
- Advancing USask's commitments to Indigenization, EDI, and sustainability

By bridging research and practice, BRIDGE will position USask and Edwards as leaders in **responsible business innovation**—regionally, nationally, and globally.

1. Overview of the Centre

1.1. Name of the proposed centre

The Edwards School of Business proposes the formal establishment of the ***Business Research Integration and Development Group at Edwards (BRIDGE) Knowledge Centre*** at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).

BRIDGE Knowledge Centre received provisional centre status in June 2023 and serves as a dedicated hub for collaborative business research, industry engagement, and knowledge mobilization.

1.2. Mission and Vision

Mission Statement:

The mission of the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre is to ***strengthen connections*** between researchers, industries, businesses, and community partners by connecting academic research with business practice. The Centre advances applied research, knowledge translation, and research-informed business solutions, ensuring that academic insights lead to tangible, real-world impact.

To achieve this, BRIDGE focuses on **5 core pillars**:

- Conducting business research that bridges theory and practice
- Fostering impactful and socially responsible research and knowledge co-creation
- Hosting knowledge exchange events, such as the Prairie Business Summit, to ensure research is relevant to business and aligned with USask's and Edwards' Signature Areas;
- Supporting interdisciplinary partnerships and applied research opportunities
- Strengthening industry-academic collaboration through strategic partnerships and meaningful engagement

We envision that this mission will require achieving a balance between basic and applied research, while expanding efforts to translate, synthesize, and communicate the relevance of research results and findings for practitioners, communities, and stakeholder groups.

Vision Statement:

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre aspires to be a nationally and internationally recognized leader in socially responsible and impactful business research, connecting researchers, businesses, and communities.

Key Activities:

- Hosting Strategic Events and Summits (e.g., Prairie Business Summit)
- Facilitating Partnered Research and Innovation (e.g., academic-industry projects)
- Translating Knowledge for Impact (e.g., research into actionable reports for partners)
- Enabling Digital Collaboration and Access (e.g., Research Knowledge Portal)
- Supporting Talent Development and Research Capacity (e.g., graduate and Postdoc opportunities)

By formalizing BRIDGE's status as a full centre, the USask will solidify its role as a key contributor to business research and industry engagement in Saskatchewan, Canada, and beyond.

2. Rationale for the Centre

2.1. Unique Niche Addressed by the Centre

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre represents a strategic opportunity to enhance USask's capacity to address pressing business and societal challenges through research collaboration and knowledge mobilization. The Centre serves as a structured hub that facilitates engagement between academia, industry and community partners, ensuring that business research is not only theoretically robust but also practically relevant.

Currently, Edwards and USask lack a dedicated research and knowledge translation entity that systematically fosters industry-academic partnerships at the scale required to maximize engagement with businesses, industries, governments and communities. The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre addresses this gap by providing a formal structure to support:

- Applied research initiatives aligned with business needs and industry challenges
- Interdisciplinary collaborations spanning disciplines across USask's campus (e.g., business, engineering, public policy, health, agriculture, education and many others) and mobilizing opportunities via USask centres and incubators such as OPUS, Co-Labs, and Collider
- Knowledge translation efforts that transform academic findings into actionable business strategies

Since receiving provisional status, BRIDGE has demonstrated its value through extensive consultations with business leaders, our Dean's Advisory Council, academic partners, and industry associations. These engagements have confirmed the demand for a centre that fosters collaboration and translates academic insights into practical, real-world solutions.

The existing support systems at Edwards—including our alumni/donor relations and communications teams as well as our college Research Facilitator and Associate Dean Research, Graduate Programs and Faculty Relations—are essential to the college's success. BRIDGE complements these resources by offering a unique support system for event management, partnership and project development, and knowledge translation. This additional capacity enhances coordination and outreach, maximizing engagement with businesses, industries, governments, and community members. The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre fills critical gaps by providing a formal structure for applied research, partnerships, and interdisciplinary collaborations. It aligns with the school's recognized [research expertise](#) in Accounting and Taxation, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Human Resources, Organizational Studies and Leadership, Marketing and Advertising, Operations Management and Information Systems, and Strategic Management and Innovation while also strengthening USask's [Signature Areas](#), particularly in Communities and Sustainability.

2.2. Why Full Centre Status?

The formal structure of a centre is essential for delivering sustained, high-impact, partner-engaged business research and outreach that cannot be effectively managed through existing units within Edwards or other centres at USask. The centre structure provides continuity, coordination capacity, and credibility necessary for:

- Long-term, multi-stakeholder partnerships
- Post-award project management
- Knowledge mobilization
- Strategic donor stewardship
- Attracting external partnered research funding towards USask's \$400 million research goal
- Supporting programmatic expansion (e.g., applied MSc, DBA)

A formalized centre structure can deliver the governance, strategic oversight, and multi-stakeholder engagement capacity required to develop and sustain large-scale, interdisciplinary research initiatives. Centres act as trusted institutional platforms with the administrative, academic, and community linkages necessary to secure donor and partner investment and to deliver long-term, programmatic initiatives aligned with USask's mission. A centre structure also offers the potential to play a significant role in developing a future professional doctorate with applied outcomes for partners from business, industry and community.

Institutional Value Added: BRIDGE enhances USask's and Edwards' capacity by:

- Serving as a connector between academic research and external needs
- Supporting applied, interdisciplinary projects across colleges
- Translating knowledge into usable outputs (briefs, toolkits, community presentations)

By leveraging Edwards' core research strengths in *sustainable and accountable business, business innovation, entrepreneurship, and business education*, BRIDGE will position itself as a leader in responsible and impactful business research, ensuring USask remains a hub for cutting-edge business innovation and engagement. The niche addressed by the centre not only helps to solidify our position as a U15 university among Canadian business schools, but to be the University the world needs.

2.3. Comparison: BRIDGE and the Centre for Entrepreneurship

As requested by the Planning and Priorities Committee, a detailed comparative analysis of BRIDGE and the Centre for Entrepreneurship is provided in **Appendix A**. This analysis highlights both overlapping and distinct functions, clearly demonstrating the complementary nature of the two centres. In summary, while both centres support innovation and external engagement, BRIDGE serves as the applied research and knowledge mobilization hub connecting faculty, industry, and community, whereas the Centre for Entrepreneurship is the student- and venture-focused hub cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets and skills. Their mandates are complementary, and both contribute to Edwards' broader strategic goals.

2.4. Relationship with OPUS

Opus is USask's deep tech incubator, created in 2022 by Innovation Mobilization and Partnerships within the Office of the Vice-President Research. Its focus is on mobilizing innovation by supporting faculty, students, and staff who wish to explore entrepreneurship, build business ideas, and take university-generated intellectual property and research discoveries to market. Opus specializes in **lab-to-market commercialization, patenting, and venture incubation**, providing entrepreneurial training, mentorship, and incubation support for startup founders.

BRIDGE and Opus operate at different points on the research-to-impact continuum. **Opus focuses on commercialization of research-based inventions**, while **BRIDGE focuses on knowledge mobilization and applied business research** from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds that strengthens partnerships between academia, industry, and communities. Where Opus supports deep tech and startup ventures, BRIDGE provides platforms like the Prairie Business Summit and BRIDGE Exchange Series to convene stakeholders, co-develop applied projects, and translate research into actionable insights for organizations.

The two units are complementary:

- **Distinct Roles:**
 - **Opus** → Venture incubation, IP commercialization, entrepreneurial training.
 - **BRIDGE** → Applied research, knowledge translation, industry/community engagement.
- **Collaboration Opportunities:**
 - Joint events or training pathways linking research translation with commercialization.
 - Shared student training (e.g., entrepreneurship courses feeding into applied research projects).
 - Coordinated engagement with industry partners to ensure both startup and non-startup pathways are supported.

A more detailed analysis of the relationship and opportunities for coordination between BRIDGE and Opus is provided in **Appendix C**.

2.3. Campus Contributions and Benefits

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre will serve as a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration across the Edwards School of Business and the broader University of Saskatchewan campus. BRIDGE provides a structured framework for research integration, facilitating meaningful engagement between academic experts, industry leaders, and community organizations and partners. This collaborative ecosystem will foster innovative solutions to complex business challenges, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Key Contributions to the Campus Ecosystem:

- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** BRIDGE connects researchers from diverse fields—including and not limited to: Agriculture, Arts and Science (including Computer Science), Engineering, Law, Health Sciences, and Public Policy—to *create cross-disciplinary solutions to business challenges*.
- **Industry Research Partnerships:** The Centre *streamlines industry-academic collaboration* through structured matchmaking, proposal development assistance, and project management.
- **Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Opportunities:** Students benefit from *mentorship, applied research funding, and direct engagement with businesses*, strengthening academic and professional development.

These strategic collaborations will catalyze innovative research initiatives and attract external funding, bolstering the university's overall research profile and impact.

2.4. Centre Membership

BRIDGE uses centre membership as a mechanism to identify individuals willing to engage in partnerships, their specific areas of expertise, and the kinds of partnership projects they wish to be involved in. This membership list is more of a tool to create matches and connections between academic researchers and the specific needs of the business community. Becoming a member of the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre offers a wide range of benefits designed to strengthen connections between researchers and the business community in building

meaningful partnerships and advance research activities and outcomes. BRIDGE will prioritize creating a seamless and supportive experience for all members, both internal and external. By providing a tailored support system – including access to resources, knowledge translation, project development, and advancing proposals to fund opportunities while working closely with existing research supports – we foster collaboration and drive innovation.

Membership Eligibility and Responsibilities: Centre member eligibility includes anyone who is part of the USask community, who is engaging in business research or interdisciplinary collaborations with business researchers, and those within the business ecosystem who align with the centre’s mission. BRIDGE will serve as a hub to engage the USask community in partnership opportunities, recognizing that business challenges often require inter-, multi-, trans-, and cross-disciplinary collaborations. Membership responsibilities are intentionally minimal to reduce burden, however we do ask that centre members be willing to participate as Managing Committee Members as needed, acknowledge BRIDGE supports in their academic outputs, be featured on the BRIDGE website and social media, and be willing to discuss potential research collaborations with partners looking for research that matches their expertise should their goals align.

Benefits of Centre Membership include:

- ***Streamlining the Research Process for Collaboration:*** BRIDGE removes common barriers to research and industry partnerships by streamlining coordination, managing partnerships and collaborations, and supporting project development from inception to funding applications. We establish clear expectations for both researchers and industry partners, ensuring research insights translate into actionable outcomes that foster lasting, high impact relationships. For our community and business partners, we cultivate projects by identifying the best fit within our centre membership at Edwards and the USask community to facilitate meaningful connections with research faculty and students. As a central hub, BRIDGE simplifies the process, providing access to cutting-edge research opportunities and strategic partnerships that drive success.
- ***Data and Knowledge Management:*** BRIDGE will establish a secure data repository to enhance research engagement and facilitate evidence-based business solutions. Modeled after the USask-City of Saskatoon data licensing agreement, this repository will ensure secure access to industry-partnered research datasets, increasing research impact and collaboration. As we develop partnerships and expand our collaborations, datasets collected through business and industry engagements will be securely stored and made accessible to all BRIDGE members. This repository will support relevant, informed, and impactful research while maintaining rigorous data security protocols. To ensure proper governance and accessibility, we plan to model the BRIDGE data repository system after the established USask-City of Saskatoon agreement. Our goal is to collaborate with the library to create a secure, centralized repository exclusively available to BRIDGE members. This service will be facilitated by Data and GIS Librarians, ensuring expert oversight and seamless access for researchers.
- ***Funding Opportunities:*** Centre members eligible to hold grant funds can apply for one of two postdoctoral funding awards of up to \$25,000 annually, providing significant financial support for research projects. Members can also leverage mentorship opportunities, particularly through student-engaged partner projects, and benefit from assistance with industry focused funding applications such as Mitacs or SSHRC Partnership Engage Grants.
- ***Knowledge Translation:*** BRIDGE’s dedicated knowledge translation supports help transform research findings into actionable insights tailored to specific audiences and knowledge users, enhancing the visibility and impact of researchers’ work. As part of our planned BRIDGE Pulse Survey, members can

contribute to survey questions and access valuable trend data, enriching their research with real-world insights.

- **Strengthening Connections:** Centre members receive priority access to networking events and summits that enhance collaboration between academia and industry. These opportunities, paired with strategic relationship management and project support, help members advance individual and collaborative research initiatives. At the core of these efforts is the [Prairie Business Summit](#), a biennial flagship event led by the [BRIDGE Knowledge Centre](#) and the Edwards School of Business. More than just a gathering, the Summit serves as a catalyst for innovation, partnerships, and actionable insights for businesses, policymakers, and researchers across the Prairie region. BRIDGE plays a key role in planning, organization, and following up post-summit follow to ensure that discussions lead to real outcomes. The inaugural Summit, taking place May 5-6, 2025, at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon, will focus on the transformative potential of AI for Saskatchewan businesses, exploring how emerging technologies can enhance competitiveness, productivity, and economic growth. The event is generously supported by the [Brownlee Family Foundation's gift](#) to Edwards and USask, underscoring a shared commitment to advancing business innovation across the Prairies.

2.5. Centre's Role in National and International Research Environments

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre is uniquely positioned to serve as a national and international leader in responsible business research, with a clear focus on bridging academic insights and practical business applications. By championing knowledge translation through targeted industry forums, workshops, and strategic events, the Centre will build stronger ties between theoretical research and real-world business practice. Through partnerships with national and international academic institutions, businesses, and community organizations, BRIDGE will foster collaborative initiatives that generate actionable solutions to complex business and societal challenges. The Centre will also facilitate the potential to integrate fee-for-service research, project management services, and the development of applied research projects, expanding its capacity to engage with external partners across various sectors.

By engaging in forums, community events, and tailored project collaborations, BRIDGE will contribute to national dialogues on business innovation and responsible industry practices, while also influencing international best practices in business research.

Benchmarking and Differentiation: Within Canada, BRIDGE aligns itself with institutions such as Queen's [Centre for Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Social Impact](#), Wilfrid Laurier University's [Lazaridis Institute](#), and the Rotman School of Management's [Creative Destruction Lab](#), all of which have made significant strides in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. Internationally, it shares common ground with centres like MIT's [Initiative on the Digital Economy](#) and [INSEAD's Blue Ocean Strategy Institute](#), which emphasize interdisciplinary and applied research in emerging business fields responding to modern challenges like digital transformation and globalization.

Where BRIDGE distinguishes itself is through its regional commitment to Saskatchewan and prairie businesses. It uniquely integrates responsible business leadership and community-based engagement into its research agenda. Unlike centres focused solely on venture scaling or digital economy strategies, BRIDGE addresses the intersection of business innovation and community impact, placing an emphasis on Indigenous partnerships, rural economic development, and sustainable business practices.

2.6. BRIDGE's Unique Value Proposition:

- **Local Impact, Global Relevance:** Leveraging its prairie-centred expertise, BRIDGE crafts solutions relevant to regional businesses and shares knowledge with wider national and international communities.
- **Theory-to-Practice Integration:** BRIDGE is explicitly designed to close the gap between academic research and business application through actionable knowledge translation.
- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** The Centre engages a diverse range of fields, from business and engineering to public policy and computer science, creating *multifaceted solutions* to today's business challenges.
- **Responsible Business Research:** Beyond corporate social responsibility, BRIDGE embeds principles of *ethical leadership* and *sustainability* across all projects, contributing to socially impactful research outcomes.

By creating spaces for dialogue, fostering partnerships, and producing insights that matter to both practitioners and policymakers, BRIDGE will actively shape Canada's role in global business research and innovation ecosystems. These unique features position BRIDGE as a valuable addition to the business research landscape at USask, offering perspectives and approaches that complement existing USask centres while filling important gaps in current research and practice.

“The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre is uniquely positioned to serve as a national and international leader in responsible business research, with a clear focus on bridging academic insights and practical business applications”

3. Research and Academic Goals

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre's research and academic priorities focus on fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and sustainable growth within Saskatchewan and the prairie region. We aim to strengthen research integration by providing resources for applied research, facilitating interdisciplinary partnerships across the University of Saskatchewan, and connecting researchers with industry and community partners.

Knowledge translation is central to our efforts, ensuring that academic research is transformed into actionable insights through industry forums, workshops, and tailored publications. We are committed to building academic-industry partnerships by prioritizing research that aligns with industry needs and measuring the impact of collaborative projects on both academic outcomes and business practices. Additionally, we offer robust research support, including project management assistance, access to a business data repository, and funding opportunities such as postdoctoral awards.

Our focus on mentorship and training ensures that graduate students and postdoctoral researchers are engaged in meaningful, partner-led projects. Finally, we prioritize sustainable business practices and local industry development, addressing the unique challenges and opportunities faced by prairie businesses. BRIDGE will contribute to USask's research culture by integrating community impact into research design, providing robust support for research partnerships, and positioning Edwards as a hub for relevant, responsible, and innovative business scholarship.

3.1. Key Centre Activities

- **Strategic Networking and Knowledge Exchange Events:** We recently hosted our flagship biennial [Prairie Business Summit](#) in May 2025, which engaged over 350 participants from industry and business, academia, government and the broader community with local, national and international speakers. This first event is one of many upcoming events hosted in 2025-2026, with our next event planned for October 2025 to bring participants and wider community together on specific topics to continue discussions and momentum from the May Summit.
- **Business Community-Academic Partnered Research Projects:** Focused on solving real-world business challenges through applied research and enhancing social responsibility and sustainability, BRIDGE creates opportunities for partnered research. Through follow-up to the centre hosted events, our team will support researchers and business community members in building strong relationships and engage in project planning and development. Through our growing centre membership, we can assist with matchmaking between partner needs and academic expertise. Through BRIDGE as a key connector and our Edwards research supports, including Associate Dean of Research and Research Facilitator, we can support the development of robust partner research funding and leverage funds to best support projects.
- **Knowledge Translation:** BRIDGE serves as a key resource for translating academic research into actionable insights for partners from business and community. There is a distinct need for and unique value proposition for translating academic research into a format that is translatable and usable for businesses, organizations and communities that can benefit from these insights. We purposely translate business focused research at USask for the broader community in the way of reports, infographics, factsheets and interactive toolkits.

- **Research Knowledge Portal:** In addition to a variety of events connecting USask with the business community, one-to-one project development and knowledge translation, we will be launching an online research hub. The portal will serve as a hub for connecting academic researchers, students and business/industry members and serve as a platform to facilitate collaborations and knowledge exchange for continued conversations post event and as a showcase of translated research. Without an online space connecting people across Saskatchewan and beyond, we may miss important opportunities to foster partnered research and collaborative projects.
- **Graduate and Postdoctoral Research Opportunities:** Enhancing student engagement and industry-relevant research, we will work with teams to support graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. Specifically, Edwards has committed to providing partial funding for two postdoctoral fellows per year over the next five years, with the long-term goal of sustaining this support through dedicated donor contributions.

4. Contribution to USask commitments

4.1. Indigenization

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre will actively support USask's commitments through targeted initiatives across its operations and research focus. With respect to Indigenization, the centre will foster respectful and collaborative partnerships with organizations such as the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Indigenous Economic Development Network (SIEDN), Canadian Council for Indigenous Business (CCIB), Indigenomics Institute, National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB), Indigenous Works and the Luminary Initiative, Indigenous Innovation Initiative, Indigenous Resource Network (IRN), and the National Indigenous Economic Prosperity Institute. The centre will also prioritize engaging in meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities and perspectives, ensuring their voices, knowledge systems, and priorities guide our work through meaningful representation on our Advisory Council. Our centre is dedicated to fostering reconciliation and supporting Indigenous self-determination by meaningfully engaging with UNDRIP, the TRC Calls to Action, the National Indigenous Economic Strategy for Canada, and the First Nations Principles of OCAP in all aspects of our work.

4.2. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

EDI efforts will include ensuring diverse representation in leadership and research teams, prioritizing EDI-focused research projects, and creating inclusive networking events.

4.3. Sustainability

Sustainability will be addressed through a dedicated stream of research on sustainable business practices, collaborations with USask's School of Environment and Sustainability, and by aligning research with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

To formalize these commitments, the centre has established a dedicated oversight Managing Committee and is working to develop specific performance indicators for each area. We also plan to include a dedicated section in its Annual Report and implement a regular review process. By integrating these approaches, the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre will not only align with USask's core commitments but also enhance the relevance and impact of its research in both local and global contexts.

5. Assessment

To evaluate the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre's performance and growth, we have identified five Key Performance Indicator (KPI) categories. Each KPI includes a focused set of core measures that are both impactful and easy to capture, ensuring efficient and meaningful assessment of activities and outcomes.

KPI Category	Objective	Measures
1. Partnerships & Collaborations¹	Track the quality and diversity of partnerships and collaborative project outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of new and ongoing partnerships (industry, community, academic)• Partner satisfaction score (annual survey)• Number of completed collaborative projects with measurable outcomes
2. Membership Engagement & Satisfaction	Measure member participation and satisfaction with BRIDGE initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of active members (internal and external)• Participation rates in events and projects• Member satisfaction score (annual survey)• Number of funding proposals supported
3. Knowledge Translation & Impact	Evaluate the production and application of knowledge mobilization efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of knowledge translation outputs (e.g., briefs, toolkits, reports)• Number of public/industry-facing events held• Usage/applicability based on member/partner feedback
4. Research Support & Collaboration	Track research support activities and student/postdoc engagement in projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of researchers supported (e.g., project facilitation, funding apps)• Number of graduate students and postdocs engaged• Student/postdoc satisfaction (feedback survey)• Number of postdoc awards granted annually
5. Visibility & Recognition	Track BRIDGE's external visibility and presence in the research and business communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Website traffic and social media engagement• Number and tone of media mentions• Engagement at flagship events (e.g., Prairie Business Summit)• Number of collaborations resulting from events

6. List of Proposed Members

6.1. Centre Team Structure

Managing Director (appointed, existing faculty member):

Joelena Leader
leader@edwards.usask.ca
306-966-5297

Research and Events Coordinator:

Kristan Embrett

BRIDGE Managing Committee:

- Craig Wilson, Associate Dean of Research, Faculty Relations and Graduate Programs
- Joelena Leader, BRIDGE Managing Director
- Kenneth Fox, Chair of Accounting Centre
- Dana Carriere, Strategic Advisor Indigenous Initiatives

- Norman Sheehan, Faculty, Accounting
- Joe Schmidt, Faculty, Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour
- Shan Wang, Faculty, Finance and Management Science
- Kristan Embrett, Research & Events Coordinator (non-voting)

Current BRIDGE Knowledge Centre Members:

We currently have 18 members at USask including 17 Edwards faculty members and 1 USask faculty member from another college.

Advisory Council Members:

The following are confirmed external Advisory Council members for the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre. We aim to secure 6 – 12 industry and community representatives including Chambers of Commerce, professional associations and business leaders. We have 11 confirmed Advisory Council members with the first meeting to be held Fall 2025:

Confirmed:

Name and Position	Affiliation
Jason Aebig, CEO	Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce
Milton Tootoosis, Chief Economic Reconciliation Officer and Founder and Chair	Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA) and Saskatchewan Indigenous Economic Development Network (SIEDN)
John Desjarlais, Executive Director and Chief Impact Officer	Indigenous Resource Network and Kihew Consulting and Research
Keith Moen, Executive Director	North Saskatoon Business Association (NSBA)
Kamila Wyszomirski, Vice President	Saskatchewan Professional Marketing Association (SPMA)
Ashlee Langlois, CEO	Chartered Professionals in Human Resources (CPHR) Saskatchewan
Paul Lepage, Partner, Private Enterprise	KPMG International Limited
Karen Churchill, CEO	AgWestBio
Martin McInnis, Executive Director	Co-operative Superannuation Society Pension Plan Member of Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Society of Saskatchewan
Donnalyne Thorsteinson, CEO and Executive Director	Supply Chain Canada, Saskatchewan Institute
Monique Simair, VP Science and Innovation	Integrated Sustainability

Internal members include the Managing Director (Chair), Associate Dean of Research, Director of Advancement, and Research and Events Coordinator (support). An additional 2-3 USask representatives outside of Edwards will be invited to sit on the Advisory Council to promote cross-disciplinarity and relevance

¹ Partnerships in our context refer to a formal or long-term commitment and relationship, often tied to a project, while collaborations may be more flexible forms of partnered projects, with informal agreements over a defined period of time or completed after achieving a particular goal.

across USask. These members will be drawn from a pool of existing Centre Directors whose research overlaps with BRIDGE goals and will be invited upon full centre approval.

7. Governance

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre appointed the Managing Director Dr. Joelena Leader, who holds a faculty appointment at the Edwards School of Business, in January 2024. The Managing Director reports to the Dean of the Edwards School of Business and works closely with the Associate Dean, Research, Graduate Programs and Faculty Relations. The Centre also has formed a Managing Committee and an Advisory Council.

The Managing Director is responsible for managing the operations of the centre, including overseeing the research centre's operations and managing its budget; supervising staff members; managing the research plan effectively and efficiently, ensuring that accepted standards of research ethics are met; managing the space needs of the centre; establishing working groups or committees to provide appropriate guidance and advice in support of their responsibilities; and preparing an Annual Report for the Dean. The management of the centre is a part of the appointed duties for the Managing Director and their teaching load is reduced accordingly (2 course release), approved by their respective Department Head and the Dean. The Managing Director is an appointed role by the Dean, normally for a term of five years.

The Managing Committee was established in March 2024 with Terms of Reference. This committee guides decision-making around key functions and core activities of the centre including research areas, technology support, and development, knowledge transfer, events and communications, centre membership and project and funding proposal requests. The managing committee comprises the following members:

- ▶ three faculty members;
- ▶ the chair of the Accounting Centre;
- ▶ the Managing Director;
- ▶ the Associate Dean of Research at Edwards;
- ▶ Strategic Advisor Indigenous Initiatives;
- ▶ Research and Events Coordinator (non-voting);
- ▶ Research Facilitator (non-voting).

The chair of the Accounting Centre will coordinate communication with accounting firms and the accounting profession.

The Advisory Council represents our external partners and provides guidance on research focus areas and themes that are of benefit to the external USask community. The Council will be comprised of between 5 and 10 industry and community partners. Members are drawn from regional business associations, industry associations, Indigenous organizations, professional associations, and community associations. To promote cross-disciplinarity and continuity, the Advisory Council will also consist of 2-3 USask representatives outside of Edwards, drawn from existing Centre Directors whose research overlaps with BRIDGE.

Once granted full centre status, a review of the governance structure will be examined to determine whether adequate oversight and support are in place. For example, the managing committee will review the proposed governance structure to ensure it is adequate in terms of quality control and relationship management. Should any gaps present themselves, the Managing Committee will review the structure for additional support.

8. Finances and Resources

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre is supported by a blended revenue model that combines operational funding from the Edwards School of Business and targeted donor contributions, event revenue, research grants and project funding, and fee-for-service consulting activities. This diversified approach ensures long-term sustainability and aligns with Section 5.0 of the USask Centres Policy.

BRIDGE is strategically positioned within Edwards School of Business to draw on and complement existing research support services and to amplify engagement with external partners through dedicated project management, knowledge translation, and interdisciplinary research support.

8.1. Five-Year Financial Commitment and Sustainability

BRIDGE's financial model meets the policy requirements through:

- **Confirmed base support** from the Dean of the Edwards School of Business, including:
 - Two-course teaching release for existing faculty member (salary coverage) who is appointed as the Managing Director. This leadership role is not a centre expense and reflects the Dean's long-term commitment to the Centre.
 - Annual postdoctoral fellowship funding (\$50,000 per year for 2025–2030) with potential donor discussions in the work to cover this cost.
- **Donor contributions**, including confirmed support from the Brownlee Family Foundation for staffing to support the Research and Events Coordinator, Prairie Business Summit (PBS) delivery, and related events and knowledge mobilization activities.
- **Targeted grants** (e.g., SSHRC, Mitacs) to support partnered research, student training and KM activities.
- **Revenue-generating activities**, including ticketed events (PBS and BRIDGE Exchange Series), corporate sponsorships, overhead administrative fees for funded projects, and fee-for-service consulting and knowledge translation.
- **Close coordination with the Edwards Advancement Office** and the University's fundraising strategy to align future donor outreach with institutional priorities.
- **Secured funding**
 - The Dean has committed two Postdoctoral Fellowship awards for \$25,000 each over the next 5 years.
 - Donor funding provided for the following with coverage for the next 5 years:
 - ▶ Staff: Research and Events Coordinator (core personnel for BRIDGE)
 - ▶ Events: Prairie Business Summit – a biennial flagship event, BRIDGE Exchange Series and similar events
- **Anticipated funding**
 - We anticipate receiving additional donor funds to assist with various aspects of the centre, these include but are not limited to:
 - ▶ Expanded team structure (new funded staff positions)
 - ▶ Graduate students working in casual appointments or internships
 - ▶ Faculty chair positions
 - ▶ Visiting professorships
 - ▶ Named conferences, lectures, and speaker events
 - ▶ Research projects

- **Fee-for-Service:** The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre is actively developing a fee-for-service stream to provide consulting, project management, and knowledge translation services. Planning is underway to launch this model following full centre approval, with revenues earmarked to support graduate students engaged in BRIDGE projects.
- **External & Tri-Agency Grants:** We anticipate leveraging partner cash and in-kind contributions for external and Tri-Agency grants that would also aim to support student mentorship.
- **Event revenue**
 - Leverage ticket revenue to support future BRIDGE projects. This includes ticket sales from the Prairie Business Summit and other events, particularly targeting external audiences and large corporations interested in attending and engaging with BRIDGE initiatives.
 - Offer discounted virtual participation tickets for Prairie Business Summit keynote sessions, making them more accessible and expanding audience reach while generating additional revenue
- **Corporate Sponsorship**
 - Offer a Prairie Business Summit sponsorship package to corporate partners, providing an opportunity to sponsor future BRIDGE projects. In return, sponsors receive prominent advertising in post-summit reports, showcasing their support and engagement with impactful initiatives.

Sustainability Strategy:

- Maintain donor base and expand sponsorships for events
- Leverage SSHRC Partnership and Mitacs funding for applied research
- Explore opportunities for cost-recovery through applied services and toolkits

Five-Year Budget Overview

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre's five-year budget demonstrates a sustainable and diversified financial model that blends confirmed support from college and donor contributions, event revenues, research grants, and fee-for-service activities. Confirmed commitments include annual postdoctoral funding from the Dean and multi-year donor support from the Brownlee Family Foundation for staffing and flagship events. Projected revenues build on these foundations through Prairie Business Summit ticket sales, partner sponsorships, Tri-Council and Mitacs funding, and overhead recovery on research projects. On the expense side, the budget prioritizes core personnel, general operations, knowledge mobilization supports, and major events such as the biennial Prairie Business Summit and the BRIDGE Exchange Series. Together, these resources position BRIDGE for financial sustainability while scaling its impact across research, partnerships, and community engagement. Detailed figures are provided in **Appendix B – Five-Year Budget Plan**.

9. Consultation

Summary of Consultations

As part of our ongoing efforts to foster strategic partnerships and gather critical insights, we conducted a series of high-level consultations with key stakeholders across various sectors between January and December of 2024. These consultations aimed to gain feedback on the Prairie Business Summit (PBS), an inaugural biennial signature event hosted by the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre at the Edwards School of Business. We consulted on

the topic of AI and its relevance for Saskatchewan businesses. Continued discussions will explore opportunities for collaboration, and future PBS topics on innovation, and growth within the region and beyond.

Organizations and Individuals Consulted to Date:

We engaged with several organizations and influential business and community leaders, including:

- Wayne Brownlee, Former CFO, Nutrien and Philanthropist
- Prabha Ramaswamy, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce,
- Andrew and John Williams, CanWest Commercial & Land Corp.,
- Dale Bruce Hopkins, Vendasta
- Grant Isaac and Dylan Bryngelson, Cameco,
- Tony Zuck, Zu
- Kari Harvey and Dani Wawryk, Innovation Saskatchewan
- David Belof, Deloitte
- David Dube, Concorde Group
- Murad Al-Katib and Omer Al-Katib, AGT Foods
- Roman Coba and Heather Ryan, Federated Co-operatives Limited
- Micheal Nederhoff, WilRo Consulting
- Joe Gill, McKercher LLP
- George Reddekopp, Redde Properties Inc.
- Scott Verity, KPMG
- Lorne Wright, Wright Construction,
- Alain Gaucher, MLT Aikins,
- Vaughn Wyant, Wyant Group
- Jeret Bode, IA Private Wealth Inc.,
- Cliff Wiegers, Wiegers Financial & Benefits
- Gavin Conacher, World Trade Centre (WTC) Saskatoon and Advisory Committee

10. Endorsement Letter

Letter of Endorsement from the Dean of the Edwards School of Business is included on the following page.

11. Appendices

- Appendix A – Comparative Analysis – BRIDGE vs. Centre for Entrepreneurship
- Appendix B – Five-Year Budget Plan
- Appendix C – Relationship Between BRIDGE and Opus
- Appendix D – Earlier Response to Centres Subcommittee



Centres Subcommittee
Planning and Priorities Committee
University Council
University of Saskatchewan

September 2, 2025

Dear Members of the Centres Subcommittee,

On behalf of the Edwards School of Business at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), I am pleased to provide my strong endorsement for the formal establishment of the Business Research Integration and Development Group at Edwards (BRIDGE) Knowledge Centre. The Centre has already demonstrated significant value through its provisional status, and its formalization as a full research centre aligns directly with USask's research mandate and strategic priorities. The Edwards School of Business guarantees financial and administrative support to enable the development of BRIDGE.

The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre represents an important initiative to advance USask's commitment to fostering impactful, interdisciplinary research that bridges academic knowledge with industry and community needs. With a mission centered on applied research, knowledge mobilization, and industry-academic collaboration, BRIDGE will play a critical role in strengthening USask's engagement with business communities at local, national, and international levels. Through research, collaborations with businesses, and partnerships across academic disciplines, business schools create and share knowledge and insights at the speed of business serving as catalysts that have the power to transform companies – and the world¹. This aligns with USask's strategic plan by enhancing innovation, building meaningful partnerships, and fostering an ecosystem of research excellence.

Key contributions of the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre include:

1. **Alignment with USask's Research Priorities:** BRIDGE's research mandate supports USask's Signature Areas of Research, particularly in Communities and Sustainability, and integrates interdisciplinary collaboration across fields such as business, public policy, agriculture, and health sciences.
2. **Industry and Community Engagement:** The Centre's role in fostering knowledge translation through events like the Prairie Business Summit and strategic networking initiatives ensures that academic research has tangible, practical impact.
3. **Student and Faculty Research Opportunities:** BRIDGE provides unique opportunities for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty to engage in industry-partnered research projects, fostering the next generation of business scholars and practitioners.
4. **Commitment to Indigenization, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** The Centre is committed to fostering partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations, aligning its initiatives with the principles of reconciliation and inclusive economic development.

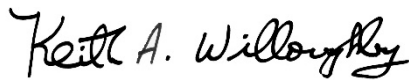
¹AACSB [Let's Lead Boldly: Elevating the Value of Business Schools](#)

5. **Sustainability and Long-Term Viability:** With a blended funding model that includes institutional support, donor contributions, and external research grants, BRIDGE is well-positioned for long-term sustainability and growth. In particular, I am pleased to confirm ongoing support for two \$25,000 postdoctoral awards annually over the next five years. Donor funding will be deployed for this postdoctoral support.

The establishment of BRIDGE as a full centre will not only enhance the Edwards School of Business's reputation within the U15 business school landscape but will also contribute to USask's broader mission of addressing pressing societal challenges through collaborative and impactful research.

I strongly encourage the Centres Subcommittee to approve this proposal, as BRIDGE embodies the spirit of innovation, engagement, and excellence that defines USask's research goals. I am confident that the Centre will play a transformative role in advancing socially responsible and impactful business research for years to come.

Best regards,



Keith A. Willoughby, Ph.D.
Dean
Professor, Department of Finance and Management Science
Edwards School of Business, University of Saskatchewan
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Phone: (306) 966-2128
E-mail: willoughby@edwards.usask.ca

APPENDIX A - Comparative Analysis – BRIDGE vs. Centre for Entrepreneurship

The **BRIDGE Knowledge Centre** and the **Centre for Entrepreneurship** are intentionally complementary within Edwards and USask’s ecosystem. While both contribute to fostering innovation and business engagement, their **core functions and stakeholders differ**:

- **BRIDGE** is primarily an *applied research and knowledge mobilization hub*, serving faculty, students, businesses, and community partners. Its flagship initiatives, such as the Prairie Business Summit and BRIDGE Exchange series, create large-scale platforms for interdisciplinary collaboration, applied research translation, and regional and national visibility. BRIDGE addresses the gap between academic research and business practice, ensuring that insights move beyond scholarly outputs into actionable impact.
- The **Centre for Entrepreneurship**, by contrast, is a *student- and venture-focused hub*. It nurtures entrepreneurial mindsets and skills, offers experiential learning opportunities, and connects students with entrepreneurship supports across the provincial ecosystem. Its programming spans creativity workshops, mentorship, micro-financing, and curriculum development (entrepreneurship major/minor), positioning it as the “front door” for entrepreneurship at USask.

In short:

- **BRIDGE** = *Research-to-practice pipeline*
- **Centre for Entrepreneurship** = *Idea-to-venture pipeline*

Their partnership potential lies in co-hosted events, joint training pathways, and mutual reinforcement of innovation culture. This clear delineation ensures both centres avoid duplication and collectively strengthen Edwards’ role as a leader in business innovation.

Table: Side-by-Side Comparison

Dimension	BRIDGE Knowledge Centre	Centre for Entrepreneurship
Core Mandate	Applied research, knowledge mobilization, industry and community partnerships, interdisciplinary projects.	Inspire, ignite, and enable entrepreneurship through student/community programming, creativity, community, and knowledge.
Primary Stakeholders	Faculty researchers, students, postdocs, business and industry leaders, community organizations.	Students, student entrepreneurs, staff, faculty across campus, entrepreneurial ecosystem partners.
Focus	Translating academic research into practical solutions; strengthening university–industry/community linkages; convening dialogues (Prairie Business Summit, BRIDGE Exchange) and partnered projects.	Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets/skillsets; supporting venture creation; linking students/staff with entrepreneurial opportunities within and across campus.
Signature Activities	Prairie Business Summit (360+ participants), BRIDGE Exchange series, Research Knowledge Portal, knowledge translation, postdoc funding, applied research matchmaking, toolkits/reports.	Pitch competitions, creativity workshops, entrepreneurship learning lab, student venture coaching, micro-financing, mentorship programs, entrepreneurship major/minor, student-managed venture capital fund.
Revenue Model	Diversified: donor support (Brownlee Foundation), Dean’s commitment (postdoc awards), grants to support projects, administrative overhead costs and	Donor and alumni prospects, grants and sponsorships, revenue from executive education and entrepreneurship programming/services.

	matching funds (SSHRC/Mitacs), event revenues, fee-for-service consulting.	
Governance	Managing Committee (faculty + staff), Advisory Council (industry/community partners), reporting to Dean.	Interim Director, proposed team including start-up coach, marketing/communications, Indigenous advisor, Entrepreneur in Residence.
Geographic/Community Role	Prairie-focused with expanding national and international reach, linking research to local businesses, rural/Indigenous economic development, sustainability.	Province-wide entrepreneurship hub, linking into Indigenous, newcomer, and broader entrepreneurial communities.
Overlap	Both support and connect USask with external stakeholders.	Both engage with Indigenous and diverse communities.
Distinct Roles	BRIDGE Knowledge Centre → Connects <i>research to practice</i> ; emphasizes knowledge translation, applied business research, and multi-stakeholder engagement.	Centre for Entrepreneurship → Builds <i>entrepreneurial capacity</i> ; emphasizes student/venture creation, coaching, and entrepreneurship education.

APPENDIX B – Five-Year Budget Plan

BRIDGE Knowledge Centre 5 Year Budget Plan - Revenue Sources

Source	Year 0 (2024-25) (Provisional)	Year 1 (2025-26)	Year 2 (2026-27)	Year 3 (2027-28)	Year 4 (2028-29)	Year 5 (2029-30)	5-Year Total + Provisional	Notes
Dean's Commitment	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$300,000	Postdoc funding secured by the Dean's commitment of 2 x \$25,000 Postdoc Awards over 5 years with the goal of having this donor funded in year 3 onward.
Donor Contributions	\$630,000	\$150,000	\$500,000	\$120,000	\$500,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$2,000,000	Brownley Family Foundation \$2,000,000 gift. Gift installments to 2027-28, extension to 2029-30 anticipated (carry over). We have split how the gift will be allocated by year to cover large scale events (Prairie Business Summit) and staff salary.
Ticket Sales (PBS/Events)	\$68,914	\$8,000	\$100,000	\$12,000	\$125,000	\$16,000	\$329,914	PBS year 1 revenue from ticket sales and projected sales during gap year and future PBS
Partner Sponsorships	\$15,000	\$18,000	\$45,000	\$22,000	\$60,000	\$26,000	\$186,000	Innovation Saskatchewan Sponsorship in Provisional Year, exploring future partnerships for PBS and smaller scale events in gaps years
Postdoc and Student Training Co-funding (e.g., SSHRC, Mitacs)	~	\$15,000	\$16,500	\$18,000	\$19,000	\$20,000	\$88,500	Planned approach to leverage co-funding model with partners for postdocs and student training through SSHRC and Mitacs
BRIDGE Projects (overhead fees)	~	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$100,000	Research projects with associated overhead recovery fees for administration
Research Grants (Tri-Council)	\$87,095	\$95,000	\$100,000	\$105,000	\$110,000	\$115,000	\$612,095	Externally held research projects (PI-administered) linked to BRIDGE through in-kind contributions or through Centre-based knowledge mobilization services, including student engagement
Fee for Service - Contracted consulting for applied projects	~	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$16,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$79,000	We are finalizing fee for service structure in 2025-26 and will plan for late fall to promote this with the business community.
TOTAL REVENUE	\$851,009	\$352,000	\$838,500	\$363,000	\$909,000	\$382,000	\$3,695,509	Breakdown: Confirmed Funds: \$2,471,009 Projected/Anticipated Funds: \$1,224,500

Note: **Green** = Confirmed funding, **Blue** = Projected funding/anticipated, **Dark Green** = Anticipated donor funded over time

BRIDGE Knowledge Centre 5 Year Budget Plan - Expenses

Category	Year 0 (2024-25) - Provisional	Year 1 (2025- 26)	Year 2 (2026-27)	Year 3 (2027- 28)	Year 4 (2028-29)	Year 5 (2029- 30)	5-Year Total + Provisional	Notes
EXPENSES								
1. Personnel (Salaries & Benefits)	\$155,000	\$177,000	\$159,100	\$161,300	\$163,500	\$165,800	\$981,700	
Managing Director (faculty)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Existing faculty member appointment with 2 course release contributed by ESB
Research & Events Coordinator	\$105,000	\$107,000	\$109,100	\$111,300	\$113,500	\$115,800	\$661,700	Starting base salary of \$83,000 + benefits (approx. \$105,000 total compensation), costs scaling based on a 2%/1.5% increase
Communications Intern (Co-op)	0	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,000	\$20k for shared intern (2025–26); full-time Marketing & Communications Coordinator anticipated by 2027 (donor funded)
Postdoc Award	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$300,000	Dean confirmed two \$25,000 matching postdoc awards
2. General Operating Costs	\$11,000	\$29,824	\$25,500	\$26,000	\$27,000	\$27,500	\$146,824	
Office Supplies & Software	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$33,000	General operating costs (supplies, printing, software, productivity tools, etc.)
BRIDGE Portal/IT Maintenance	~	\$18,824	\$14,000	\$14,500	\$15,000	\$15,500	\$77,824	Higher Logic Platform: \$18,824 (Yr 1), \$14,000 annually + \$500/yr inflation thereafter.
Travel (research & outreach)	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$36,000	\$6,000 per year travel funding for outreach and travel related to research projects supported.
3. Events & KT	\$650,000	\$61,000	\$431,000	\$61,000	\$431,000	\$61,000	\$1,695,000	
Prairie Business Summit	\$630,000	0	\$400,000	0	\$400,000	\$0	\$1,430,000	Major events (PBS): \$400K (400–450 attendees; lower in future years)
Exchange Events Series	\$15,000	\$45,000	\$15,000	\$45,000	\$15,000	\$45,000	\$180,000	Exchange events: 3 per gap year @ \$15K each (150 attendees); 1 event in PBS years
Pulse Survey	\$0	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$30,000	Survey to identify business community needs and priorities, inform collaborations, and support research data requests
Reports, Policy Briefs, Media	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$55,000	Supports design, content, and research student assistance.
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$816,000	\$267,824	\$615,600	\$248,300	\$621,500	\$254,300	\$2,823,524	

APPENDIX C – Relationship Between BRIDGE and Opus

Overview of Opus

Opus is the University of Saskatchewan’s startup incubator, established in 2022 within Innovation Mobilization and Partnerships in the Office of the Vice-President Research. Its mandate is to mobilize innovation by helping faculty, students, and staff transform research discoveries and intellectual property into commercial ventures. Opus focuses on **entrepreneurial training, mentorship, and venture incubation** for innovators who want to build businesses and bring university-generated technologies to market.

Distinct Roles of BRIDGE and Opus

While both Opus and BRIDGE support innovation at USask, they are **complementary rather than duplicative**:

- **Opus:**
 - Focuses on *deep tech incubation, venture creation, and commercialization*.
 - Supports intellectual property (IP) development, patenting, and lab-to-market pathways.
 - Primary stakeholders: inventors, researchers with IP, and startup founders.
- **BRIDGE:**
 - Focuses on *applied business research, knowledge mobilization, and industry/community engagement*.
 - Provides platforms such as the **Prairie Business Summit** and **BRIDGE Exchange Series** to convene stakeholders and translate academic research into actionable insights.
 - Primary stakeholders: faculty researchers, students/postdocs, industry, business, and community partners.

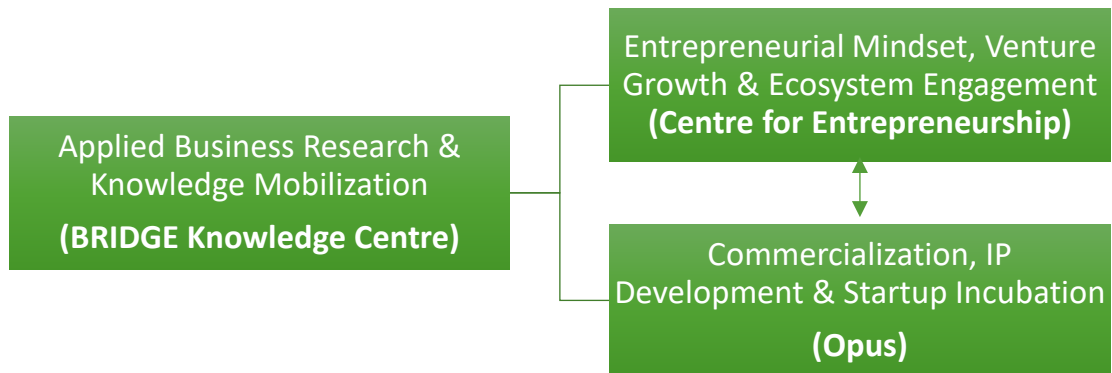
Together, these two distinct units cover the **full spectrum of research-to-impact pathways** at USask.

Points of Complementarity and Collaboration

- **Distinct but Connected Pathways:**
 - BRIDGE helps generate insights, frameworks, and applied research outputs that inform business and community practices.
 - Opus translates research discoveries into ventures and startups that can commercialize innovations.
- **Collaboration Opportunities:**
 - **Joint events and programming** that showcase both applied research and startup ventures.
 - **Student pathways:** students engaged in entrepreneurship programming at Opus can also participate in BRIDGE’s applied research projects, and vice versa.
 - **Grant co-applications:** collaborative external funding proposals (e.g., SSHRC, Mitacs) that include both knowledge mobilization (BRIDGE) and commercialization (Opus) components.
 - **Cross-centre/unit coordination:** biannual strategy meetings between BRIDGE, Opus, and the Centre for Entrepreneurship to ensure alignment and synergy.

The below continuum highlights how BRIDGE, Opus, and the Centre for Entrepreneurship each address different but connected stages in the innovation journey, collectively strengthening USask’s innovation ecosystem.

USask Business Research & Innovation Ecosystem



The connection between BRIDGE and Opus is strategic and complementary. BRIDGE ensures that academic research informs practice across industries and communities, while Opus enables commercialization and startup development. Together, they ensure that USask innovations can travel the full pathway from research insight to societal and economic impact.

APPENDIX D – Earlier Response to Centres Subcommittee

May 17, 2025

Prepared by:

Dr. Joelena Leader, Assistant Professor of Management and Managing Director for the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre

Dr. Craig Wilson, Professor of Finance, and Acting Associate Dean, Research, Graduate Programs and Faculty Relations

Tara Hackl, Executive Assistant to the Associate Deans

1) Why is the formal structure of a centre necessary for this work to occur?

What value does a centre specifically add to this research and outreach work that cannot be done through the Edwards School of Business or some other existing structure?

The formal structure of a centre is essential to deliver high-impact, interdisciplinary, and partner-engaged research and outreach that cannot be effectively managed through existing structures within the Edwards School of Business or other existing units. BRIDGE provides the *credibility*, *continuity*, and specialized *capacity* required to:

- Sustain long-term, multi-stakeholder partnerships
- Coordination and management of projects
- Translate academic research into actionable, real-world solutions
- Build and steward external relationships across sectors and regions
- Support new applied programming (e.g., a professional doctorate or project-based MSc)

Unique Value Added by a Centre Structure

Function	Existing Units	BRIDGE Centre Value Add
Project Management, Partner Engagement and Knowledge Transfer	Communications, Donor Relations, Research Facilitator	BRIDGE offers a centralized platform for applied project coordination and management (post-award), industry relationship management, knowledge mobilization, and community engagement that builds on existing college-level supports
Strategic Continuity	Individual faculty or department-level efforts (limited capacity)	BRIDGE provides long-term stability and visibility for external partners across academic cycles where individual faculty and department capacity is limited

Programmatic Expansion	Grad programs and co-op support (limited capacity)	BRIDGE enables growth of applied, partner-driven research programs (e.g., professional doctorate) requiring dedicated infrastructure
Research Knowledge Translation	Individual faculty and research staff (limited capacity)	BRIDGE translates research into practical toolkits, research briefs, business reports, and community-facing outputs
Fundraising & Investment Readiness	College-based advancement efforts	BRIDGE supports donor stewardship and project-based investment and reporting (e.g., Prairie Business Summit donor funding and post-summit deliverables)

Examples of Successes Tied to Centre Structure

Since receiving provisional status, the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre has achieved key high-impact outcomes that would not have been possible without the dedicated structure, coordination capacity, and external-facing platform that the centre provides. These successes highlight BRIDGE's critical role in advancing applied research, fostering strategic partnerships, and extending the reach of Edwards and USask into the broader community.

1. Strategic Donor Investment and the Prairie Business Summit

- The ***Brownlee Foundation gift*** was secured in large part due to the credibility, continuity, and accountability that BRIDGE's formal centre structure provides. This funding supported the hiring of BRIDGE's Research and Events Coordinator and served as seed investment for our ***inaugural Prairie Business Summit (PBS)***—a signature, multi-stakeholder event designed and delivered by BRIDGE at the Edwards School of Business.
- PBS convened over 50 local, national, and international speakers and more than 300 attendees across business, government, and academia. BRIDGE led all aspects of content development, logistics, relationship-building, and community engagement, and continues to manage follow-up, post-summit reporting, and partnership activation. This level of coordination and impact would not have been possible without a centre dedicated to sustaining long-term, strategic engagement.

2. Strengthening Applied Research Capacity

- BRIDGE has launched and now manages a ***Postdoctoral Fellowship Program***, connecting emerging scholars to real-world research priorities through industry and community partnerships.
- It has also facilitated experiential learning opportunities for students, including research matchmaking with external organizations through course-based projects.

3. Building Strategic Partnerships Across Sectors

Through its dedicated structure, BRIDGE has played a key role in initiating and sustaining new partnerships across the city, province, and beyond. This includes:

- Ongoing research collaborations with the City of Saskatoon, and partnering with organizations, chambers of commerce, and industry partners.
- Establishing an ***external Advisory Council*** to guide research priorities and improve relevance.

- Co-developing grant proposals with other USask centres (e.g., [CUIISR](#), on a SSHRC-CMHC Partnership Grant “*People, Places, Policies, and Prospects: Affordable Rental Housing for Those in Greatest Need.*”) and with external universities (e.g., a SSHRC Partnership Grant with the newly created *Transforming Research for Social Impact Hub*, University of Alberta).

4. Providing a Central Access Point for External Stakeholders

BRIDGE serves as a **hub for external engagement** specifically with non-academic partners to navigate and engage with USask business research. BRIDGE fields and triages requests from businesses, alumni, and public sector organizations seeking connections to faculty expertise, collaborative research, student engagement, and consulting or speaking opportunities. Notable examples include:

- Course-based projects such as a marketing research engagement with LutherCare Communities and an upcoming partnership with the Canadian Primary Care Sentinel Surveillance Network (CPCSSN-SK) and the College of Medicine.
- Supporting interdisciplinary research projects, such as:
 - A SHRF-funded study on workplace mental wellbeing with Ethical Digital.
 - A Research Junction initiative on ethical AI in public service delivery, in collaboration with the City of Saskatoon.
- Helps identify faculty and research capacity for emerging opportunities: BRIDGE acts quickly to connect external partners with appropriate researchers—both within and beyond the Edwards School of Business. For example, when the Saskatoon Police Service submitted a request outside the scope of Edwards faculty expertise, BRIDGE served as a **campus-wide connector**, brokering potential collaborators across colleges and centres. This highlights BRIDGE’s unique role as a responsive hub for facilitating interdisciplinary partnerships and ensuring community and industry requests are matched with the right expertise at USask.

These activities extend the institutional capacity of Edwards and USask by providing **ongoing relationship management, knowledge mobilization, and coordination services** that complement, rather than duplicate, existing communications, advancement, or research supports.

Without a formal structure, these achievements would not have been possible due to the need for centralized coordination, governance, and relationship stewardship beyond what individual researchers or departments can sustain.

2) How will duplication be minimized with other centres and administrative units?

BRIDGE recognizes the importance of complementarity and actively works to minimize duplication through strategic alignment, communication, and collaboration (outlined in).

Differentiation from Other USask Units

USask Unit	Core Mandate	BRIDGE’s Distinction	Opportunities to Collaborate
Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-	Research and education focused on co-operative development,	BRIDGE is sector-agnostic, working across industries and	Collaborative project development, grants

operatives (CCSC)	governance, policy, business research	focused on applied research but not specifically co-operatives	and learning opportunities
OPUS	Incubation of deep tech ventures by faculty and students	BRIDGE supports applied business research in broader sectors (HR, marketing, operations) with no commercialization/IP mandate	Opportunities to work together in the entrepreneurship space, classroom engagement, and collaborative events
Innovation Mobilization & Partnerships (OVPR)	Commercialization, IP, industry partnerships	BRIDGE supports non-commercial research impact and community-engaged knowledge mobilization	Partnership coordination (reduce duplication of efforts)
Edwards School of Business	Faculty research, academic programs, co-op program, alumni and donor relations	BRIDGE adds capacity for partnership development, project coordination and management, and outreach that is external-facing and strategically sustained	Collaborate across internal units and support to build capacity for research, programs, and sustaining partnerships

Measures to Minimize Duplication and Maximize Institutional Value

BRIDGE is committed to working collaboratively across USask to align efforts, avoid duplication, and enhance the university's ability to meet its ambitious research goals—particularly the aspiration to reach \$400 million in annual research funding. As a nimble, externally-facing platform focused on applied business research and knowledge mobilization, BRIDGE complements existing centres and research units while also unlocking new opportunities that are often left untapped. . Our goal is to ensure we support our community working in the business research space and knowledge transfer space (and beyond), including working closely with other centres in meaningful ways that enable collaboration and coordination of resources.

Key mechanisms include:

- Fostering Innovative, Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations**
 BRIDGE is uniquely positioned to facilitate unconventional research partnerships—particularly those that bring together business scholars with researchers in social sciences, humanities, and fine arts. These collaborations often fall outside traditional funding patterns but have significant potential to attract SSHRC, NFRF, and community-engaged funding streams. By providing a dedicated entity to cultivate these relationships, BRIDGE helps extend USask's reach into new, high-impact research domains.
- Exploring Collaborative Grant and Outreach Initiatives**
 We actively seek opportunities to co-develop research proposals, co-host seminars or event, and align outreach efforts with other centres and units. This ensures BRIDGE's programming and partnerships add value to the existing research ecosystem and build synergies rather than overlap.
- Emphasizing Complementary Focus**
 Unlike tech-transfer units or discipline-specific centres, BRIDGE focuses on research-to-practice translation and multi-sector knowledge mobilization. We are not positioned to commercialize

intellectual property or incubate ventures, but rather to build lasting research partnerships that create applied societal and economic value.

- **Ensuring Regular Coordination**

We will establish biannual coordination meetings with other centres and administrative units to review programming, funding plans, and partnership activities, ensuring transparent alignment and joint strategic planning.

- **Clarifying Our Distinctive Scope and Value**

BRIDGE supports applied, interdisciplinary business research across sectors—addressing real-world problems through community and industry collaboration. Other centres typically focus on specific disciplines, while BRIDGE operates across sectors, serving as a connector and mobilizer of research that is otherwise difficult to activate under traditional structures.

Please see below under **Appendix D-1: BRIDGE Alignment and Collaboration Plan: Strengthening Partnerships Across USask** for additional details on how we operationalize coordination, alignment, and collaboration across USask.

3) Will the centre focus on local and provincial work, or will it be national and international in scope?

BRIDGE is rooted in Saskatchewan, but its structure and programming are intentionally designed to scale across local, national, and international contexts. Our work reflects a place-based commitment to regional priorities, while contributing to broader systems of research, education, and innovation.

- **Local and Provincial Impact:**

With a growing network of partners—including the City of Saskatoon, Indigenous economic development organizations, and regional industry and business associations—BRIDGE is positioned to respond directly to Prairie-based challenges. Our Advisory Council and ongoing consultations ensure alignment with local needs and priorities.

- **National and International Reach:**

BRIDGE actively contributes to national and global research through SSHRC-funded collaborations, cross-sector partnerships, and projects with international relevance. Our knowledge mobilization models are designed for transferability, enabling other jurisdictions to learn from and adapt Saskatchewan-based insights and for Saskatchewan to gain global insights and best practices.

Our goal is clear: while impact must begin locally, the knowledge, relationships, and research we develop through BRIDGE are meant to inform broader systems. In this way, BRIDGE serves as a regional hub with national relevance and global insight, advancing USask's reputation as a leader in applied, community-engaged business research.

Summary of BRIDGE's Unique Contribution

- **Mandate Differentiation:** Focused on applied business research and knowledge mobilization—not commercialization, IP, or discipline or model-specific research.
- **Interdisciplinary Infrastructure:** Provides coordination, matchmaking, and project development capacity that extends beyond what departments or faculty can manage alone.

- **Audience and Impact Orientation:** Engages non-academic audiences with accessible and action-oriented outputs and structured and sustained engagement.
- **Flagship Programming:** Leads initiatives like the Prairie Business Summit that do not exist elsewhere on campus and are designed to connect research to real-world priorities.
- **Collaborative and Complementary Approach:** Operates as a broker and connector across Edwards and USask—not in competition for resources, but to activate shared research goals.

The formal centre structure is essential for BRIDGE to scale its applied research mission, deepen external partnerships, and serve as a responsive, credible hub for responsible and relevant business scholarship. In doing so, BRIDGE enhances USask’s institutional capacity for impact—locally, nationally, and globally—while supporting faculty, students, and community partners in meaningful ways and open the door for collaboration across centres and units on campus.

Appendix D-1: BRIDGE Alignment and Collaboration Plan: Strengthening Partnerships Across USask

Purpose

To ensure that the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre aligns with existing centres, administrative units, and research platforms at the University of Saskatchewan, this plan outlines a proactive strategy to:

- Minimize duplication of effort
- Leverage shared infrastructure and expertise
- Build strong, mutually beneficial relationships
- Support a cohesive university-wide research and engagement ecosystem

1. Guiding Principles

- **Complementarity, Not Competition**
BRIDGE will focus on identifying synergies for collaboration and areas of shared interest while clarifying where our focus and activities differ from those of other units (e.g., commercialization, deep tech, co-operative-specific business research).
- **Transparency and Relationship Stewardship**
Our engagement will prioritize open communication, respect for existing mandates, and sustained relationship-building—not just project-based coordination.
- **Mutual Value and Shared Impact**
Collaborative efforts will aim to support both BRIDGE’s mission and the priorities of our campus partners, with joint benefits for research, teaching, and community impact.

2. Identify and Prioritize Units for Engagement

To reduce duplication and enhance alignment with institutional priorities, BRIDGE will proactively engage a broad set of campus partners. These engagements will focus on identifying areas of synergy, supporting collaborative initiatives, and ensuring that applied business research can contribute to emerging university-wide strategies.

a. USask Research Centres & Innovation Ecosystem Partners

These centres and incubators offer opportunities for interdisciplinary research, regional engagement, and innovation-focused collaboration. Examples include:

- Centre for the Study of Co-operatives (Co-operative business models)
- OPUS (deep tech incubator)
- The Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUSIR)
- Global Institute for Water Security (for cross-sector systems thinking)
- Co.Labs, Collider, and Innovation Saskatchewan (innovation ecosystem partners)
- kihci-okāwīmāw askiy Knowledge Centre (resource for Indigenous communities and organizations seeking information, training, and research partnerships).

BRIDGE will explore ways to jointly support industry- and community-engaged projects, cross-promote programming, and coordinate outreach where appropriate.

b. University Administrative and Research Support Units

Engagement with these units ensures alignment with major institutional strategies and leverages shared resources for research development, funding, and international collaboration. Examples include:

- **Research Acceleration and Strategic Initiatives (RASI):**
BRIDGE will coordinate with RASI to explore how applied business research and community partnerships can support major institutional funding applications (e.g., CFREF, CERC, joint CRCs). While not all initiatives will require business participation, BRIDGE can help identify where such partnerships could add value—and ensure business researchers are considered in early-stage concept development.
- **Innovation Mobilization and Partnerships (IMP):**
Coordination with IMP will ensure BRIDGE complements efforts around commercialization, while offering a pathway for non-IP, socially focused research engagement.
- **International Office:**
Opportunities to collaborate on European or global funding (e.g., Horizon Europe, EU-Canada partnerships) may be underleveraged. BRIDGE will explore how to better align with international grant strategies, particularly where interdisciplinary business-social science connections are relevant.
- **Edwards Research, Advancement, and Career Teams:**
Continued collaboration with internal research facilitation, communications, alumni/donor relations, and the co-operative education team to strengthen student, faculty, and partner support.

c. Academic Colleges, Schools and Departments

BRIDGE will engage with academic units across campus to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations, research matchmaking, and student engagement. While some connections will align with traditional business partnerships, others may open innovative, non-traditional collaborations where business faculty play a co-applicant or applied research role. Examples include:

- Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS) for integrating business research and policy

- Colleges of Engineering, Law, Agriculture & Bioresources, and Arts & Science
BRIDGE will take a deliberately open and inclusive approach to partnership development—seeking to foster innovative, interdisciplinary projects that may not fall within conventional research patterns but are well-suited to Tri-Council and collaborative funding streams.

3. Engagement Approach & Activities

Initial Engagement Phase (Fall 2025)

- **Host Introductory One-on-One Meetings**

Request 30–60-minute meetings with directors, unit leads or ADRs (including a request to present at the ADR Forum) to:

- Share BRIDGE’s mandate, strategic priorities, and programming (e.g., Prairie Business Summit, postdoc awards, KM supports)
- Explore alignment or areas of distinction in mandate and programming
- Identify current or future collaboration opportunities, including co-developed research projects, interdisciplinary grant applications, and cross-centre knowledge mobilization initiatives

- **Develop a BRIDGE Partner Briefing Kit**

A short, customizable package for meetings and follow-ups, including:

- One-page overview of BRIDGE’s mission, mandate and services
- Summary of key initiatives (e.g., PBS, data repository initiative, postdoc awards)
- Potential collaboration models (e.g., joint grant proposals, co-supervised students, co-hosted events, shared access to datasets, resources, or partner networks events)

Ongoing Coordination and Collaboration Development

- **Dedicated Relationship Brokerage and Research Matchmaking**

BRIDGE will devote time and resources to actively connect researchers with community, industry, and public sector partners. This includes:

- Facilitating early-stage conversations and co-development of research ideas
- Helping to identify appropriate collaborators across colleges and disciplines
- Supporting teams through project development and management, partnership agreements, and knowledge mobilization planning

This kind of hands-on, cross-campus coordination is aimed at advancing USask research support goals that BRIDGE is uniquely positioned to provide.

- **Create a Shared Calendar of Events and Funding Opportunities**

Coordinate with other centres to avoid duplication, promote joint opportunities, and improve visibility of key research funding deadlines and events campus-wide.

- **Offer Co-Sponsorship and Joint Programming**

Where mandates align, BRIDGE can co-host or co-develop public events, research panels, applied forums, or mobilization-focused activities (e.g., with Co-operatives Centre, CUISR, or OPUS).

- **Initiate Biannual BRIDGE Cross-Centre Roundtable**

Host twice-yearly strategic meetings with representatives from key centres and administrative units to:

- Share strategic plans and programming timelines
- Identify collaboration mechanisms and alignment opportunities
- Explore shared resources (e.g., data platforms, communications, training modules)

4. Collaboration Opportunities to Explore

BRIDGE's long-term vision includes serving as a USask resource to support collaborative applied business research and experiential learning opportunities. While our capacity is still growing, even in its current phase BRIDGE offers the structure, relationships, and coordination needed to initiate partnerships that may otherwise fall through institutional gaps. The following opportunities outline both short-term goals and areas for longer-term strategic growth:

- **Professional Doctorate and Project-Based MSc Models**

Explore collaborative program models with units such as JSJS and the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives to support community- and industry-partnered projects. These programs would extend—but not duplicate—existing graduate or co-op offerings by enabling sustained, applied research experiences tied directly to real-world challenges. BRIDGE can serve as a hub to help coordinate project opportunities, broker relationships, and connect students and faculty with external stakeholders.

- **Knowledge Mobilization Strategy Sharing**

Work with campus centres and the OVPR to align BRIDGE's KM tools and activities with university-wide frameworks (e.g., research impact metrics, research briefs, co-developed knowledge products, open-access toolkits). BRIDGE brings specialized expertise in business and community-facing KM practices that complement institution-wide efforts.

- **Joint Grant Applications and Emerging Research Clusters**

While still scaling, BRIDGE offers a platform to support early-stage idea development, partner engagement, and applied research collaboration—particularly for large-scale or interdisciplinary funding opportunities (e.g., SSHRC Partnership Grants, Mitacs, joint Tri-Council programs). This work will be conducted in close coordination with the Associate Dean Research and Edwards Research Facilitator, who provide critical expertise in grant strategy, facilitation, and application support.

BRIDGE complements their work by:

- **Focusing on external relationship-building**, especially with community, business, and public sector partners
- **Identifying applied research opportunities** where business faculty can play a co-investigator or collaborator role across colleges
- **Acting as a connector and catalyst** for non-traditional, cross-disciplinary clusters that align with institutional goals but may fall outside conventional funding streams

As the centre grows, BRIDGE will play a more formalized role in brokering collaborative proposals and supporting the early formation of applied research teams—while continuing to align closely with Edwards and USask's internal research supports.

In the short term, BRIDGE will identify and pursue high-potential opportunities on a case-by-case basis; in the long term, the centre aims to establish dedicated staff support for co-developing and managing collaborative proposals.

- **Cross-Promotion of Postdoctoral and Student Opportunities**

Collaborate with other centres and academic units to jointly promote and support interdisciplinary postdoctoral training, student research placements, and co-supervised graduate work. BRIDGE's postdoctoral award program offers a model for shared mentoring and applied, partner-driven research training.

5. Evaluation and Accountability

BRIDGE is committed to evidence-informed growth and transparent reporting of its contributions to the Edwards School of Business and the University of Saskatchewan's research ecosystem. As USask pursues an ambitious goal of \$400 million in annual research funding, BRIDGE will play a growing role in supporting this objective through collaborative, community- and industry-engaged research. Key evaluation activities will include:

- **Track Engagements and Activities**

Maintain an internal log of all partnership development efforts, including:

- Meetings with academic and administrative units
- External partner interactions
- Action items, follow-up outcomes, and relationship status

- **Monitor Research Outcomes and Growth in Funding Contributions**

On an annual basis, assess:

- Number and nature of collaborative initiatives launched or supported
- Research proposals submitted with BRIDGE involvement (as lead or co-developer)
- External research funding brought into Edwards and USask with support from BRIDGE (tracked year-over-year to demonstrate growth toward institutional funding goals)
- Uptake of knowledge mobilization supports (e.g., co-developed outputs, event attendance, toolkit downloads)

- **Collect Feedback and Refine Approaches**

Solicit feedback from internal and external partners to assess:

- Perceived value of BRIDGE supports
- Effectiveness of coordination and communication
- Opportunities to enhance collaborative capacity and reduce friction in research engagement processes

- **Report Back and Communicate Impact**

Share outcomes and lessons learned annually through the BRIDGE Annual Report, including metrics tied to:

- Institutional alignment with USask research priorities and signature areas
- Contributions to research funding growth
- Strategic engagement with underrepresented or emerging research areas
- Visibility and reach of applied business research outputs

While BRIDGE is still in an early growth phase, these evaluation mechanisms will ensure progress is measured, impact is demonstrated, and the Centre continues to make a meaningful contribution to USask's broader research strategy and funding success.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Craig Wilson, Acting Associate Dean of Research, Graduate Programs, and Faculty Relations and Joelena Leader, Managing Director of BRIDGE Knowledge Centre

FROM: Christian Willenborg, Chair, Planning & Priorities Committee (PPC)

DATE: June 12, 2025

RE: **Proposal for the Business Research Integration and Development Group (BRIDGE) Knowledge Centre**

Thank you for attending the Planning and Priorities Committee (PPC) meeting on June 11, 2025 to present your proposal for full centre status of BRIDGE. The committee appreciated the responses provided to their questions and engaged in a thorough and constructive discussion. However, members raised concerns regarding the submission of two centre proposals from the same college, particularly noting the potential overlap and similarities between BRIDGE and the Centre for Entrepreneurship. As a result, the committee decided to defer its decision until the Fall, passing the following motion.

Motion: That the decision for the BRIDGE Centre be deferred to Fall 2025.

PPC has requested that this proposal be resubmitted for a September PPC meeting, including the following:

- A detailed comparison of BRIDGE and the Centre for Entrepreneurship. This comparison should clearly outline the unique and overlapping functions of each centre, as well as the distinct roles they will play.
- A comprehensive budget and funding plan for the proposed centre, demonstrating a clear commitment to financial support in accordance with Section 5.0 of the [Centres Policy](#).
- How this centre connects to the work with Opus.

Additionally, members have requested the Dean of Edwards to take part in this next visit to gain a college level perspective on these centres.

Thank you for your important work for the province and the University of Saskatchewan. PPC looks forward to revisiting your proposal in the Fall.

Cc: Baljit Singh, Vice President Research
Angela Lieverse, Chair, PPC Centres Subcommittee
Jordan Sherbino, Governance Officer