

## ITEM FOR INFORMATION

**Committee Name:** Scholarships & Awards, University Council

**Date:** April 16, 2026

**Presented by:** Jason Perepelkin, Chair, Scholarships & Awards

### **Subject: Best and Brightest Award Update**

#### **SUMMARY**

The Best and Brightest Scholarships are the University of Saskatchewan's premier entrance awards and are centrally administered and adjudicated by the Scholarships and Awards Committee of Council. The Scholarships include:

- Five Presidents' Best and Brightest Scholarships valued at \$40,000 each
- Twelve Chancellor's Scholarships valued at \$30,000 each
- Twelve University of Saskatchewan Entrance Scholarships valued at \$30,000 each

Of these awards, five are Circle of Honour awards—one Presidents' Best and Brightest and two of each of the other awards—which are preferentially awarded to Indigenous students.

#### **Selection Process and Applicant Pool**

This year, the Scholarships and Awards Committee reviewed applications from 231 incoming high school students with academic averages of 95% or higher. Recipients were selected based on demonstrated leadership and contributions to both school and community life.

- The applicant pool is limited to students from domestic high schools
- Eleven applicants were from outside Saskatchewan

#### **Recipient Demographics**

Among the 29 university-wide Best and Brightest Scholarship recipients:

- 15 students are from eight different high schools in Saskatoon
- The remaining 14 students represent 11 communities across Saskatchewan, including two from Prince Albert and three from Regina
- Five recipients identify as Indigenous (Métis and First Nations)
- All recipients are exceptional leaders, learners, and future contributors to the University of Saskatchewan community

The recipients demonstrate a wide range of leadership and community engagement, including:

- Extensive volunteering with Special Olympics, Autism Services, and other organizations—one recipient founded an organization to promote inclusivity, dignity, and opportunity for marginalized groups
- Serving as editor-in-chief of a literary arts magazine

- Competing successfully at the Canada-Wide Science Fair with a gene-editing project conducted through a USask laboratory
- Serving as a volunteer firefighter

### **Future Review of the Scholarships**

The Scholarships and Awards Committee is currently reviewing the name and structure of the Best and Brightest Scholarships, with the following goals:

- Reviewing historical trends between applicants and recipients to identify any systemic biases
- Revising selection criteria to reflect broader and more inclusive definitions of leadership, volunteerism, and resilience
- Improving accessibility and increasing applications from historically marginalized communities where participation has declined
- Maintaining the focus on high-achieving students without increasing the volume of application materials for committee review

Any changes resulting from this review cannot be implemented before Fall 2028, due to the established award cycle.