

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

November 2025

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN FOUR-YEAR FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

On November 3, the Government of Saskatchewan announced a new four-year funding agreement for the University of Saskatchewan, and for all other post-secondary institutions in the province. Through this agreement, the Government of Saskatchewan has once again signalled its confidence in USask and in the social and economic impact we have on our province.

The agreement outlines the government's commitment to a three per cent increase to operating funding each year for the next four years. The agreement also clarifies that the one per cent increase implemented in 2025-26 will be permanent, meaning the three per cent increase is on top of that. Finally, there will be a change to the tuition increase limit: the former limit of four per cent for domestic undergraduate programs will be decreased in the new agreement to three per cent. We are continuing to review the details of our provincial funding and determine its impacts on our university community. Chief Financial Officer Dee Henne will be hosting a financial town hall on November 26 at noon to provide an in-depth view of USask's current and projected fiscal position.

A four-year agreement is unique in this country and will enable our university to continue to deliver a strong return on investment for Saskatchewan and its citizens. We are celebrating this investment and certainty around our funding for the next four years. The full Government of Saskatchewan announcement can be found [here](#).

FALL CONVOCATION

Fall Convocation was a day of celebration as we welcomed almost 1,000 graduates to our University of Saskatchewan alumni family. Thank you to all who contribute to making each convocation ceremony a success.

Honorary Degree Recipient

USask honoured the extraordinary community contributions and leadership of Chief Perry Bellegarde at this year's Fall Convocation, with the presentation of an honorary degree. An honorary degree is the university's most prestigious award, acknowledging worthy and unique contributions recipients have made to their community and to the world.

A member of Little Black Bear First Nation, Treaty 4 territory, Chief Bellegarde has devoted his life to advancing the rights and well-being of First Nations peoples. For more than 35 years, he has held leadership roles in Canada, including serving as Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to two terms as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (2014–2021). He describes himself as an *oskâpêwis*—a helper dedicated to service. As National Chief, he championed closing the gap in quality of life between First Nations and other families in Canada. His advocacy led to landmark achievements, including Canada's first national legislation recognizing and protecting Indigenous languages and the federal commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Internationally, he elevated First Nations leadership in sustainable development, advancing rights-based climate solutions from the Paris Agreement to the Sustainable Markets Initiative.

We were pleased to have this opportunity to honour Chief Bellegarde's many accomplishments with an honorary Doctor of Laws.

Distinguished Researcher Award

Dr. Daniel Chen (PhD), a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Division of Biomedical Engineering, was recognized at Fall Convocation with the Distinguished Researcher Award.

Dr. Chen's research has helped shape the field of bioprinting and tissue engineering from the ground up, with structures known as tissue scaffolds. He leads a collaborative research group at USask's College of Engineering, focusing on ways to expand bioprinting through improved scaffold design. He has also furthered his work in tissue engineering with new methods that improve tissue regeneration.

Dr. Chen has since become a global voice in the field of bioprinting and tissue engineering, publishing hundreds of research papers, and receiving numerous awards and fellowships including the Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering and the USask Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award. His accomplishments have led to significant advancements in his field, and his commitment to collaborative research has helped foster meaningful

interdisciplinary connections. He is also deeply committed to mentoring and training the next generation of researchers. Congratulations to Dr. Chen on this well-deserved recognition.

President's Medal

Aiden Gerwing, a student in the College of Arts and Science, was awarded the President's Medal at this year's Fall Convocation. The President's Medal is awarded to the graduating student with the highest academic average in any USask undergraduate program. Aiden graduated on November 12 with a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Business Economics. Please join me in extending congratulations to Aiden on this accomplishment.

USASK DELEGATION TRAVELS TO INDIA TO STRENGTHEN ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

A delegation of senior leaders from USask travelled to India in early November to meet with representatives from post-secondary institutions and government partners in Delhi and Mumbai regarding joint academic and research opportunities. The delegation included representatives from the India office of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Trade and Export Development.

USask has a strong and growing relationship with India through academic partnerships, and research collaborations, particularly in areas like critical minerals and food security. In addition to academic programs, USask also offers alumni travel programs to regions like South India, to allow for alumni to experience Indian culture.

At a reception at the Canadian Embassy on November 2, a dual degree agreement with the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Warangal was signed by me and NIT Warangal director Dr. Bidyadhar Subudhi. The agreement will allow students from USask and NIT Warangal the opportunity to complete 50 per cent of their PhD program at each institution. I also had the opportunity to take part in a panel discussion at the Canada-India Business Council Mumbai Business Forum on November 6, focused on the current landscape of post-secondary education in India and Canada. We are grateful to have had the chance to connect with many colleagues in India who share USask's mission to create lasting change through research and scholarly work.

REMEMBRANCE DAY 2025

USask hosted its 97th annual Remembrance Day wreath-laying ceremony on November 11. Since the opening of the monument in 1928, every year on Remembrance Day we have gathered at the Memorial Gates to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and to pay tribute to all who have served, and to those who continue to serve our country in times of war and peace. All members of the campus community and public are invited to attend this and lay a wreath in remembrance. Thank you to all who attended this year and took a moment to reflect on the importance of this day.

There are many memorials that exist on campus to honour our legacy of military history. A map of all campus memorials is available on spotlight.usask.ca.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Government of Saskatchewan commits support to establishing Global Institute for Energy, Minerals and Society

The Government of Saskatchewan is strengthening the foundation of a unique research partnership that will support energy and mineral research and help make Saskatchewan a global leader in clean energy. To date, the province has committed \$780,000 to help establish and support the operations of the Global Institute for Energy, Minerals and Society (GIEMS). GIEMS is a research and training partnership between the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and the University of Regina that began to create a collaborative pipeline of innovation and talent. As a result of Saskatchewan's ongoing international engagement efforts, a memorandum of understanding establishing the collaboration was first announced at COP28 in Dubai in 2023. The partnership aims to promote and align research and innovation in the province's energy and mineral sectors, and allow post-secondary researchers to combine resources and share knowledge to help address education and research gaps in energy and mineral sectors.

USask researchers named Canada Research Chairs

Dr. Arinjay Banerjee (PhD) and Dr. Heather Foulds (PhD) are two newly named Canada Research Chairs (CRC) at USask who are exploring ways to protect and improve the health of individuals and communities. Dr. Banerjee, a researcher at USask's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), has been named a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Zoonotic Virus and Animal Reservoirs and hopes to expand on his work in the field of One

Health, which focuses on the interconnected nature of animals, the environment and humans. Dr. Foulds is an associate professor in USask's College of Kinesiology and a former Heart and Stroke/CIHR Early Career Indigenous Women's Heart and Brain Health Chair. Named the new Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Wholistic Health and Well-Being Through Physical Activity for Indigenous Peoples, Dr. Foulds will continue her work on the importance of community, culture and physical activity for Indigenous health.

USask researchers receive support from John R. Evans Leader Fund

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) John R. Evans Leadership Fund (JELF) competition is intended to provide funding for research projects to attract and retain talented researchers, or provide equipment to researchers to further outstanding and innovative research. USask had many successful projects named as recipients in a recent funding cycle:

- VIDO researcher Dr. Arinjay Banerjee received a [John R. Evans Leaders Fund Partnership](#) to develop a world-class research program studying the relationship between coronaviruses and bats. The program will focus on the evolution of novel anti-viral strategies in bats with the goal of developing cutting-edge antiviral countermeasures for humans.
- A joint proposal from USask's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, the USask College of Medicine, and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine to [acquire cutting-edge technology to sort biological samples](#) by their cell type has received more than \$460,000 from the CFI-JELF competition. Dr. Volker Gerdts (DVM, PhD), director of VIDO and a professor in the WCVM, was one of three co-applicants on the project, alongside Dr. Peter Pioli (PhD) with the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology in the College of Medicine and Dr. Gurpreet Aulakh (PhD) with the WCVM.
- Dr. Saija Kontulainen (PhD), professor and associate dean of research in the College of Kinesiology, and colleagues, Dr. J.D. Johnston (PhD) from USask's College of Engineering and Dr. Munier Nour (MD) from USask's College of Medicine, are conducting a [first-of-its-kind pediatric bone study](#) to understand what makes bones fragile. In order to collect the data needed for their research projects, the team required high-resolution imaging tools and received a recent investment from the CFI-JELF to secure the improved imaging tool.