

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

September 2025

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Four University of Saskatchewan researchers have been recognized with one of Canada's highest academic honours for invaluable contributions in their fields. The Royal Society of Canada (RSC) is considered the most prestigious collection of Canadian scholars, artists and researchers across a vast interdisciplinary field. The RSC fosters intellectual leadership for Canada and for the world. Dr. Dwight Newman (DPhil) and Dr. Leon Kochian (PhD) have been named RSC Fellows, and Dr. Steven Rayan (PhD) and Dr. Allyson Stevenson (PhD) have both been named College Members of the RSC. I want to extend my congratulations to each of the four researchers honoured this year. The RSC will be celebrating new fellows, college members and award recipients at the 2025 Celebration of Excellence and Engagement on Nov. 15.

Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella Prize

Each year, the RSC also awards the Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella Prize to a graduating student from each of the 24 law schools in Canada. The Abella Prize is presented annually to the student who, upon graduation, is most likely to positively influence equity and social justice in Canada. **Fatima Ahmed** from the USask College of Law was honoured with the 2025 prize. She has completed degrees in law, peace studies, education, disaster management, educational leadership, project management, and computer science. Fatima came to law school as a mature student after careers in community development and teaching. During law school, she completed the CLASSIC clinical law intensive and Osgoode's Intensive Program in Indigenous Lands, Resources & Governments, completed an academic exchange in Finland, and mooted in the Bowman Tax Moot competition. Fatima was recently awarded the American Society of International Law Helton Fellowship, for which she intends to undertake field research on the ongoing genocide of Rohingya Muslims. Congratulations to Fatima on this well-deserved honour.

CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION

The Be What the World Needs comprehensive campaign came to an end in June with the announcement that USask surpassed its initial fundraising goal of \$500 million, to reach a total of \$570,739,155. From individual donations to large corporate gifts from organizations such as **Nutrien** and **Cameco**, the campaign saw thousands of USask community members, alumni and supporters from around the globe come together to advance four major areas: critical research, Indigenous achievement, student success, and the creation of visionary spaces for innovative research, teaching and learning.

In total, more than 100,000 gifts were made to the decade-long campaign from more than 27,000 companies, foundations, and individuals. There were more than 30,000 gifts to enhance the student experience through scholarships, bursaries, and mental and physical health supports. Significantly, 23 new research chairs have been funded in vitally important areas as diverse as critical minerals, neurological surgery, Indigenous health, multiple sclerosis, and sustainable and digital agriculture. Over \$90 million is invested in new and enhanced learning environments, state-of-the-art athletic facilities such as a renovated football clubhouse supported by USask's largest donors Ron and Jane Graham, and new spaces to enhance student collaboration. Complementing major multi-million-dollar gifts from corporate donors and USask's most generous alumni supporters were smaller individual contributions from tens of thousands of graduates of the university, with one out of every nine alumni donating to the campaign.

1,000 supporters gathered in Merlis Belsher for the June 18 campaign wind-up celebration as the university officially announced it had surpassed its half-a-billion dollar fundraising target by more than \$70 million. The campaign is already transforming our university, and its impact will be felt for generations to come.

GIVING DAY 2025

USask's Giving Day took place on September 10 and marked a day of generosity and support for the university community as we plan for our future after the extraordinary conclusion of the comprehensive campaign. Thanks to the generosity of alumni, donors, faculty, staff, students and friends, this year's one-day giving initiative raised \$284,821 from 570 donors in support of 95 initiatives across the university.

8TH ANNUAL MĀMOWI ĀSOHTĒTĀN INTERNAL TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION FORUM

Sponsored by the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement and facilitated by the [**Mistatimōk Committee**](#), this annual event is a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and provides an opportunity to gather and to constructively and respectfully dialogue and plan for the university environment we need and want. Join us as you are able on Friday, Sept. 26 to learn about the Decade of Indigenous Languages and Reflect back on 10 years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was released.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AND WEEK OF REFLECTION

September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day, a day that opens the door to global conversation on all aspects of Residential Schools. Leading up to September 30, from September 22-26, the USask community is encouraged to participate in a week of reflection on Truth and Reconciliation.

I encourage all members of the university community to take this opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of Residential Schools and the legacy they have left behind. Take a moment to read the orange banners in the Bowl that reflect the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action that pertain to the post-secondary education sector, access the resources and learning materials available through the University Library and take part in USask events led by students, staff, faculty and alumni. Many community events also take place around Saskatoon and throughout the province to mark the Week of Reflection and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day, and are open to all to attend. The university will remain closed on September 30 so all can take part in this important day. Resources and information are available online through the [**Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement website**](#).

USASK AND MUSKEG LAKE CREE NATION MOU

The University of Saskatchewan and Muskeg Lake Cree Nation came together in May to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The partnership is designed to advance shared priorities including post-secondary education, research, health and wellness, as well as youth mentorship, community engagement and economic development. Following the signing of the MOU, a working group will be established with members from the Muskeg

Lake Cree Nation community and key staff from various colleges at USask. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement will care for the MOU and manage the working group, ensuring a plan is built specifically to meet the needs of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

HOMECOMING 2025

It was wonderful to connect with students, staff, faculty and alumni at this year's Homecoming events and opening football game that took place Sept. 5. The Huskies took on the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds, with a 51-14 victory to kick off the 2025-26 academic year. The event hosted almost 9,551 fans. Thank you to everyone who came out to support the Huskies and to re-connect with classmates, friends and colleagues.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

USask recently announced the 2025 recipients of the Alumni Achievement Awards, one of the university's highest honours. Alumni Achievement Awards are presented each year to outstanding USask alumni who have made an impact on their communities and around the globe. Congratulations to this year's outstanding recipients, who exemplify this university's mission to be what the world needs. Full biographies of the Alumni Achievement Award winners can be viewed online at alumni.usask.ca. This year's recipients will be honoured at the [annual awards gala](#) on Monday, Oct. 20, 2025, at Rемаi Modern.

Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award

Barbara Gibson (BA'71)

As a highly regarded career diplomat, Barbara Gibson served Canada in influential positions around the globe for more than three decades. Through her expertise on the world stage, Gibson advanced the crucial role that diplomacy plays in the pursuit of Canada's national interests and in building global consensus for a rules-based international order.

Carolyn Tastad (BComm'83)

As an inspiring executive at the global corporation Procter & Gamble (P&G), Carolyn Tastad made an international impact through her passionate advocacy of gender and intersectional equity within the workplace and the world. Tastad is known as a transformative leader inside and outside of P&G, delivering breakthrough business results and changing organizational capabilities and culture.

Scott Thon (BE'85)

As a distinguished executive in the global energy industry, Scott Thon leads a diverse group of businesses in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain and has driven major energy infrastructure projects in Canada and around the world. In addition to his impact as president and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Energy, Thon is a leader in his community through his remarkable philanthropic and volunteer efforts.

Outstanding Impact Alumni Achievement Award

Brad Berg (BComm'91, LLB'92) and Brian Rolfes (LLB'91)

The professional achievements and personal commitment of Brad Berg and Brian Rolfes have significantly advanced 2SLGBTQQA+ rights and inclusivity in Canada and around the world. Their work includes the campaign for equal marriage in Canada and deep contributions to charities and educational organizations.

One to Watch Alumni Achievement Award

Joshua Letendre (MPAcc'20)

Joshua Letendre is a proud Métis accounting professional, university instructor, and non-profit leader who uplifts Indigenous voices and strengthens the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of his community. Through his grassroots leadership, cultural pride, and commitment to economic reconciliation, he is sparking transformative change in Alberta and beyond.

Keely Shaw (BSKI'16, MSc'20, PhD'24)

Dr. Keely Shaw (PhD) is a scientist and elite Para athlete who has demonstrated excellence in her academic and athletic pursuits. She has inspired others through her journey as an award-winning Paralympian and six-time World Championship medalist, and through her interdisciplinary research that has the potential to significantly impact human health.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

\$3.4 million to support two new USask facilities

Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Heath MacDonald and Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister Daryl Harrison have announced \$3.4 million over four years to support

the development of two new facilities at the University. This includes the Omics Resource Centre at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and Beef Reprotech facilities at the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence (LFCE). The investment will be delivered through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership as part of the governments' commitment to support partnerships with strategic agricultural research organizations. USask, the WCVI and the LFCE are world-class research, teaching and knowledge-transfer facilities that connect innovation across the livestock production chain.

Partnership extension with the International Vaccine Institute

The Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) at the University of Saskatchewan and the International Vaccine Institute have extended their long-standing partnership to strengthen global collaboration on infectious disease research and vaccine development, reinforcing Saskatchewan's role as a leader in science and innovation. The International Vaccine Institute is based in South Korea, and the partnership with VIDO focuses on post-pandemic global health. Minister of Trade and Export Development and Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan Warren Kaeding witnessed the signing as part of his trade mission to South Korea.

VIDO researcher named Emerging Leader in Health Sciences

USask and VIDO researcher Dr. Arinjay Banerjee (PhD) is one of five Canadian researchers elected by the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) for its inaugural Emerging Leaders cohort. CAHS is an elite organization that brings the country's top scientists and scholars together to tackle top-of-mind health concerns impacting Canadians. Over the next five years, Banerjee will have the opportunity to work closely with active members of CAHS, receiving mentorship and recognition for his dedication to One Health research—a discipline which integrates human, animal and environmental health.

USask research uses virtual reality for Indigenous health education

Dr. Soo Kim (PhD) and Dr. Stacey Lovo (PhD) with the School of Rehabilitation Science in USask's College of Medicine have received \$250,000 from the New Frontiers in Research Fund to develop new virtual reality (VR) resources to enhance health science education for Indigenous communities. In partnership with community members in Whitecap Dakota First Nation, the research team led by Kim and Lovo will co-create multiple VR resources with Indigenous youths. In discussion with communities, Lovo and Kim noted gaps in the way health science education is provided in Indigenous communities – including a lack of traditional cultural knowledge as part of the curriculum and access for remote

communities. The pair identified VR as a modern technology avenue to connect school-aged kids with health science education.

USask researcher uses laser technology to simulate meteorite impacts

An assistant professor in the Department of Geological Sciences of the College of Arts and Science, Dr. Tianqi Xie (PhD) is exploring meteorite impact craters and the changes in the rocks resulting from the impact events. The research involves using ultra-advanced synchrotron X-ray and lasers to simulate the conditions of impact events and study how the impact brings changes to feldspar, one of the most common minerals not only in the Earth's crust but also seen on the moon and Mars. Through these experiments, it can be made possible to better understand meteorite impact events and their effects throughout the solar system.