



Provost's Report to Council

September 2025

GENERAL REMARKS AND CURRENT ISSUES

As announced on August 12, I am humbled and honoured to step into the role of president and vice-chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan, for a five-year term beginning January 1, 2026. I am privileged to be a part of a community of scholars, researchers, educators, students and staff who will work together to build on USask's outstanding accomplishments and reputation. With this announcement, I will be stepping away from the interim provost role to prepare for this transition.

As President Stoicheff announced on August 27, Dr. Patti McDougall (PhD) will step in as interim provost and vice-president academic beginning October 1, 2025, until a successful search for the Provost and Vice-President position is completed and the successful candidate is appointed. She currently holds the role of deputy provost, a position she has held since 2021. Prior to that role, Dr. McDougall served as USask's vice-provost, Teaching, Learning and Students for nine years. I would like to thank Dr. McDougall for her continued commitment to serving our university and her willingness to step into this role.

USASK UPDATES

ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCES UPDATE

On Aug. 6, 2025, the University of Saskatchewan formally approved a new governance model for the Academic Health Sciences. This evolution introduces the Joint Governance Council of the Academic Health Sciences (JGCAHS), a collaborative body co-chaired by the provost and vice-president academic, and the vice-president research.

The JGCAHS replaces the former Health Sciences Deans Committee and will guide shared priorities across the health sciences, including space and building operations, simulation-based learning, collaborative research, interprofessional education, Indigenous engagement, and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

This change reflects a strategic shift toward stronger collaboration and clearer accountability across health science colleges and units. It strengthens coordination of shared initiatives while maintaining the autonomy of individual colleges and schools.

A new director of academic health sciences role has also been created to support council operations and staff within the Health Sciences unit. Committee structures and mandates will be reviewed in the coming months to ensure alignment with JGCAHS goals.

TEACHING AWARDS

The University of Saskatchewan recognized 18 faculty and staff members with 19 awards for excellence and innovation in teaching at the June 2025 USask Faculty and Staff Awards event. These awards are facilitated through the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic, and are presented each year to faculty and staff members from across colleges, schools and units who exemplify USask's commitment to be the university the world needs through their teaching and leadership activities. Congratulations to all of the past academic year's award recipients, and thank you for your extraordinary contributions to the university's teaching and learning missions.

COLLEGE UPDATES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

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

VANIER SCHOLARS

The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships are among the most prestigious awards for doctoral students in Canada, offering \$150,000 over three years to support world-class research, academic excellence and leadership. Three USask students have been selected to receive funding in recognition of their academic excellence, leadership skills, and innovative research potential. The students include Arianna Gibson, a Métis doctoral student studying clinical psychology at the College of Arts and Science, Jeremy Irvine, a doctoral student studying at the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, and Jinnath Rehana Ritu, from the USask College of Arts and Science Department of Biology.

SCHULICH LEADERS

Anastasiia Finovska and Lucas Sulewski have been named the University of Saskatchewan 2025 recipients of the prestigious Schulich Leadership Scholarship. Through The Schulich Foundation, entrance scholarships are awarded annually to 100 high school graduates enrolled in a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) undergraduate

program at partner universities in Canada, including USask. Finovska is a recipient of the \$120,000 Schulich Leader Scholarship. A graduate of Campbell Collegiate in Regina, Anastasiia will be entering USask's College of Engineering this fall. Lucas is the recipient of the \$100,000 Schulich Leader Scholarship, is a graduate of Greenall High School in White City, and will be joining USask's College of Arts and Science this fall to complete his first year remotely.

DR. MARJORIE DELBAERE APPOINTED INTERIM VICE-PROVOST, STUDENTS AND LEARNING

On September 1, 2025, Dr. Marjorie Delbaere (PhD) stepped into the role of Interim Vice-Provost, Students and Learning. Delbaere is a professor of marketing, and has previously served as Associate Dean, Research, Graduate Programs and Faculty Relations within the Edwards School of Business, as chair of University Council, and as chair of the Research, Scholarly and Artistic Works Committee. During the 2024/25 academic year, Delbaere also led the Edwards School of Business as acting dean. Some of Delbaere's contributions across USask include leading an active research program focused on communication and persuasion about complex and controversial topics in pharmaceutical products and health care, launching two new graduate programs at Edwards, and hosting the inaugural Prairie Business Summit in May 2025 that celebrated innovation, collaboration, and the future of AI-driven business transformation. She has received multiple accolades for her exceptional teaching and focus on enhancing student experience.

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS UPDATE

Shelly Lowe, a former Vice President at IBM and a respected global transformation executive, has been named executive-in-residence at the Edwards School of Business. With over 30 years of leadership experience across the corporate landscape, Lowe returns to her alma mater to inspire students, mentor emerging leaders, and share her real-world insights. As the first female executive-in-residence at Edwards, she brings a powerful voice and perspective to the role. Her leadership and experience are an incredible asset to students, faculty, and the wider business community. Lowe joins a prestigious group that includes Marvin Romanow, former CEO of Nexen, and Scott McCreath, former Senior Investment Advisor at BMO Nesbitt Burns. [Read more about Shelly Lowe's appointment.](#)

The [inaugural Prairie Business Summit](#), held in May 2025 and powered by the Edwards School of Business and the BRIDGE Knowledge Centre, brought together 360 attendees to explore the transformative role of AI in Saskatchewan's economy. Over two days, the event featured keynotes, panels, and workshops focused on AI strategy, ethical deployment, and workforce innovation, with insights from industry leaders, faculty, and tech pioneers like

Adam Cheyer, Katie King and Ross Pambrun. The summit also honoured Indigenous voices and community collaboration, reinforcing the importance of relationship-building alongside technological advancement. With strong support from donor Wayne Brownlee and partners, the summit positioned Saskatchewan as a rising leader in AI-driven business growth.

USASK LIBRARY WELCOMES NEW DEAN

The USask Library is entering a new chapter with the arrival of Dr. Lori Birrell (EdD) as its new University Librarian and Dean. A passionate advocate for curiosity, scholarship, and community engagement, Birrell brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to research and learning. With advanced degrees in feminist studies, history, library science, and higher education leadership, she has held key roles at the University of Arkansas and the University of Delaware, where she oversaw rare collections, museum operations, and contributed to shaping organizational strategy. Her collaborative fundraising efforts have secured over \$1.6 million, and her research on library leadership and workplace evolution continues to shape the field.

DIGITAL SKILLS HELP CENTRE AT USASK LIBRARY

To support students in developing essential digital literacy skills, the University Library has [opened a Digital Skills Help Centre](#) in the Murray Library with support from the office of the Associate Provost, Teaching Innovation and Strategic Initiatives. The centre will help students navigate digital platforms and critically evaluate digital information and AI-generated content to ensure that they are using digital tools ethically and effectively through free drop-in and online support from trained tutors, one-on-one appointments, workshops, and programming throughout the year.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING FIRST-YEAR ENROLLMENT UPDATE

As of September 4, the First Year Engineering Program (Re-Engineered) has 564 students enrolled, a record number for our College of Engineering. Even in the face of a drop in international students due to the new Federal rules, this is a testament to the reputational strength of the College of Engineering. Our domestic recruitment is stronger than ever, with new students coming in greater numbers from all over Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, as well as other provinces.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE DEAN'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The dean's office in the College of Arts and Science is pleased to announce two recent appointments to the Dean's Executive Committee. Dr. Jennifer Lang has been appointed Vice Dean Academic for a five-year term that began on July 1, 2025. Dr. Steven Rayan has been appointed as Interim Vice Dean Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Work for a one-year term that began on July 1, 2025. We are also pleased to welcome Dr. Pamela Downe back to her role as Interim Vice Dean Faculty Relations and Dr. Darrin Oehlerking to his role as Associate Dean Student Affairs. Both returned to their roles on July 1, 2025, following sabbatical and administrative leaves, respectively. We look forward to their contributions and leadership in the college. The dean's office extends its sincere thanks to outgoing Acting Associate Dean Student Affairs, Laura Wright and Interim Vice Dean Faculty Relations, Angela Lieverse for their service to the College.

JSGS MOU RENEWAL

Leaders from both University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina came together to celebrate the renewal of their unique collaborative partnership for the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS). The signing ceremony marked a meaningful milestone, highlighting a shared commitment towards academic excellence through experiential learning, leading-edge research, and policy innovation. Joined by provincial partners and campus community leaders, the renewal agreement strengthens the continued collaborative spirit that helps shape the next generation of policy leaders for Saskatchewan and beyond.

JSGS ONLINE MPA PROGRAM GAINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

This summer, the Online Master of Public Administration program offered by JSGS at USask was recognized with a Bronze Program Excellence Award by the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education. The recognition highlights the program's innovative approach to advancing high-quality education and learning practices that promotes lifelong learning across Canada.

BUILDING THE FUTURE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT WORKFORCE

Saskatchewan is taking another step forward in strengthening its health care workforce with the launch of a new training program for Physician Assistants (PAs). Twenty new students have joined the College of Medicine in the first cohort of the new Master of Physician Assistant Studies program. This milestone is a bold step in Saskatchewan's Health Human Resources plan to train and recruit PAs right here at home. PAs are health

professionals who have taken advanced training to practise medicine under the supervision of a licensed physician, often within a multidisciplinary health team.

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Andrew Ireson has been appointed as acting Assistant Director, Academic Internal, School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) for a term of up to one year, effective July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2026.

Dr. David Kraichy has been appointed as acting Department Head, Human Resources and Organizational Behavior, Edwards School of Business for a term of up to one year, effective July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2026.

Dr. Ibironke Odumosu-Ayanu has been appointed as Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, College of Law, for a term of up to five years, beginning July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2030.

Doug Surtees has been appointed as acting Associate Dean, Academic, College of Law, for a term of up to six months, beginning July 1, 2025 and up to December 31, 2025.

Dr. Craig Wilson has been extended as acting Associate Dean, Research, Graduate Programs and Faculty Relations, Edwards School of Business, for a term of up to one year, beginning July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2026.

Dr. Shan Wang has been appointed as acting Department Head, Finance and Management Science, Edwards School of Business for a term of up to one year, effective July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2026.

Dr. Jennifer Lang has been appointed as Vice-Dean, Academic, College of Arts and Science for a term of up to five years, effective July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2030.

Dr. Catherine Niu has been appointed as acting Associate Dean, Research and Partnerships, College of Engineering for a term of six months, effective July 1, 2025 and up to December 31, 2025.

Dr. Sven Achenbach was extended as interim Associate Dean, Faculty Relations, College of Engineering, for a term of up to two months, beginning July 1, 2025 and up to August 31, 2025.

Dr. Seok-Bum Ko has been appointed as Department Head, Electrical and Computer Engineering, College of Engineering, for a term of up to five years, effective July 1, 2025 and up to June 30, 2030.

Dr. Lori Birrell has been appointed as Dean, University Library, for a term of up to five years, beginning September 1, 2025, and up to August 31, 2030.

Dr. Amrinderbir Singh has been appointed as acting/interim Associate Dean, Academic, College of Dentistry, for a period of up to one year, beginning September 1, 2025 and up to August 31, 2026.

Dr. Marnie Kramer has been appointed as Associate Dean, Academic, College of Nursing, for a term of up to five years, beginning November 15, 2025 and up to November 14, 2030.

Heather Heavin has been appointed as Associate Dean, Academic, College of Law, for a term of up to three years, beginning January 1, 2026 and up to December 31, 2028.

Active Searches & Reviews

We are in the early stages of the following searches and reviews (no committees confirmed):

Searches:

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

Reviews:

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

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