



Provost's Report to Council

November 2025

GENERAL REMARKS AND CURRENT ISSUES

This month's Provost's report contains activity that can readily be positioned with all four of USask's Institutional Priorities for 2025-26, including adapting to our political and social realities, innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, leading through a changing financial landscape, and living a culture of philanthropy and partnership.

In early November, we received much-anticipated good news regarding the new four-year agreement (MOU II) between the Government of Saskatchewan and USask, an agreement that looks identical for all other post-secondary institutions in the province. The three per cent increase to the base operating funding committed to USask from the province each year for the next four years contributes to a stronger future for this university. This provincial support helps close a sizable portion of the financial challenges we face caused by the decline in international enrolment due to federal policy. Chief Financial Officer Deidre (Dee) Henne will provide greater details about the impact of MOU II at the November 26th town hall scheduled for noon in Convocation Hall.

A second significant element of the agreement pertained to how tuition rates increase over the next four years, beginning in 2026-27. The language of the agreement regarding mutually agreed upon limits speaks to undergraduate domestic students, where increases will fall between zero and three per cent unless tuition for a program falls below a U15 comparator median. In addition, there are several notable exemptions from the tuition element of the agreement including for the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, tuition for graduate students and tuition for international students. As we have done in the past, we are now working on developing a tuition strategy for this four-year period that will adhere to the principles we use in setting tuition. This approach will be included as part of the tuition conversations that happen each year, typically through December, January, and February. In addition to governing bodies, USask's practice includes multiple touch points

for student conversations with the goal of creating a common understanding of tuition-related matters (and University/College finances more broadly).

The third noteworthy element of the MOU II involves the requirement to develop an accountability framework through which each post-secondary institution will report on progress in achieving a set of goals mapped out by the Province of Saskatchewan. The province set out three goals including: (1) Student Success, (2) Meet the Needs of the Economy, and (3) Financial Sustainability. There are three priority actions for each goal, resulting in the need for USask to develop nine key performance indicators and targets that we will report on annually to government. These performance indicators will become a small subset of USask's strategic objectives and priorities.

Finally, with the release of the federal budget came updated information on immigration. International students are considered "temporary residents" by the IRCC's definition, and the plan is to reduce the total number of **new** student permits for international students in 2026 to 155,000 and then further reduced to 150,000 in 2027 and 2028. These numbers do not include study permit renewals for those already studying in Canada. Some good news embedded within the announcement focuses on graduate students and included the commitment from the IRCC to faster processing times for doctoral students (i.e., 14 days). Starting in 2026, masters and doctoral students at USask will be exempt from the provincial attestation letter process, which will hopefully lead to some streamlining. A new IRCC [website](#) has also been developed for graduate students to aid their immigration path.

USASK UPDATES

FALL CONVOCATION

Fall Convocation took place on November 12, and celebrated a total of 992 graduates, some of whom have earned multiple degrees or certificates. The total number of degrees and certificates awarded was 1,018. Thank you to everyone who makes each and every convocation ceremony a success. These days of celebration would not be possible without our dedicated faculty and staff.

DISTINGUISHED TEACHER AWARD

I was pleased to present the Fall Convocation Distinguished Teacher Award to Dr. Benjamin Hoy, an associate professor in the Department of History in the College of Arts and Science. Dr. Hoy, who joined USask in 2015, is celebrated for his innovative, student-centered approach to teaching, which emphasizes experiential learning through game-based

methods. His creations, such as game-based learning tools *Homesteaders* and *Policing the Sound*, have transformed history education by making complex topics interactive and accessible. Beyond the classroom, Dr. Hoy mentors students, fosters collaborative scholarship, and champions initiatives that support faculty innovation. His contributions have earned national acclaim and multiple teaching awards, underscoring his profound impact on learning at USask and beyond.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S GOLD MEDAL

Dr. Geneveave Barbo (PhD) is the recipient of this fall's Governor General's Gold Medal. This prestigious honour is given to the student who achieves the highest academic standing at the graduate level and one is awarded at each of the fall and spring convocation ceremonies. Formerly a graduate student in the USask College of Nursing, Dr. Barbo took her lifelong love of video games and leveraged it into immersive virtual reality simulations that help nursing students support migrants facing mental health challenges. Congratulations to Dr. Barbo on this outstanding accomplishment.

DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCES ROLE

Chris O'Grady has been named director of academic health sciences at the University of Saskatchewan. A USask alumnus with a master's and bachelor's degree in biochemistry, O'Grady brings over 15 years of experience in research, operations, and leadership within the university. In his previous role as director of operations for USask Health Sciences, O'Grady led strategic initiatives, managed key projects, and guided a multidisciplinary team in advancing interprofessional education and operational excellence. O'Grady's deep institutional knowledge and collaborative approach position him well to support the new Joint Governance Council for the Academic Health Sciences and further strengthen USask's health sciences programs, research, and resources.

COLLEGE UPDATES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

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

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS UPDATE

Nine Edwards students were recognized as [2025 Edwards Co-operative Education Program Award Recipients](#) for their outstanding contributions during co-op placements, receiving over \$20,000 in scholarships across five award categories. These awards celebrate the impact of experiential learning and the dedication of students in applying classroom knowledge to real-world business environments. Congratulations to Kersey Reich,

Madison Waskowic, Ruth Barut-Misiurski, Paige McClinton, James McDougall, Mackenzie Mullock, Carmen Wu, Avery Wildeman, and Asher Beattie on their well-deserved recognition.

At the University of Saskatchewan, sustainability is a core value. As a proud [PRME signatory](#), the Edwards School of Business is committed to preparing socially conscious professionals and advancing knowledge for sustainable business and communities. During Campus Sustainability Month in October 2025, Edwards celebrated this commitment by recognizing faculty members who have served as [USask Sustainability Faculty Fellows since 2022](#). The first Sustainability Fellowship at Edwards began in 2022 with Brooke Klassen and has since continued under the leadership of Dr. Norman Sheehan (PhD) and Dr. Joelena Leader (PhD). Through their work, the UN Sustainable Development Goals have been embedded into teaching, research, and community engagement.

A transformative \$5 million gift from Bernie Slogotski (BComm'67) and Thedra Hunt (BA'66) has established the [Slogotski Hunt Centre for Entrepreneurship at the University of Saskatchewan](#). Located at the Edwards School of Business, the centre will foster entrepreneurial thinking across all 18 colleges and schools through campus-wide programming, education and mentorship. It will serve as a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration, empowering students and faculty to turn ideas into action. The centre also supports USask's commitment to innovation, economic development and community engagement. Sincere thanks to Bernie and Thedra for their generosity and visionary leadership.

JSGS TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION EVENT

This October, the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy hosted award-winning Anishinaabe writer, editor, and professor of Indigenous Studies at the University of Manitoba, Dr. Niigaan Sinclair for school-wide day of learning on reconciliation and why it is the only thing to do. Nearly 100 students, faculty, staff, and alumni participated both in-person and online, creating a shared space for learning, reflection, and dialogue. As the year marks the tenth anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's final report, the event reinforced our collective responsibility to advance reconciliation as an on-going, long-term commitment. [Watch the recording here](#).

USASK GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS DAY

November 20, 2025, marks [USask GIS Day](#), an annual celebration of the impact of Geographic Information Systems and related technologies on campus and across Saskatchewan. Hosted by the University Library and key campus partners, this come-and-

go project showcase offered a dynamic and friendly environment for building connections, a platform for researchers and organizations to share how they are using GIS in their work, and an opportunity for attendees to discover the exciting ways that spatial methods and technologies are being used at USask and beyond. GIS Day is co-presented by the University Library, the Canadian Hub for Applied Social Research (CHASR), and ICT Research Computing, with support from the Nutrien Centre for Sustainable and Digital Agriculture, the Historical GIS Lab and the Department of History, and the Department of Geography & Planning.

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE LAUNCHES NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the past year, the College of Medicine has been engaged in strategic discussions to define a future path. Using a collaborative strengths-based qualitative approach, the CoM focused on leveraging strengths and opportunities to define the preferred future. The resulting plan, [Paving the Path to 2030](#), outlines shared commitments, focus areas and goals that will help shape a healthier future in Saskatchewan and beyond. For more information, [visit the strategic plan overview page](#).

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE PROGRAM EXPANSION UPDATE

Health-care training opportunities are being expanded in the province with the launch of three new programs — [Master of Physician Assistant Studies](#) (MPAS), [Master of Occupational Therapy](#) (MOT), and [Master of Speech-Language Pathology](#) (MSLP).

In August, USask welcomed twenty students to the inaugural MPAS cohort — a key step in Saskatchewan's plan to train and recruit physician assistants in the province. The cohort is engaged in an innovative curriculum that emphasizes active learning through case-based and team-based methods and early clinical exposure supported by multiple clinical partners including the Saskatchewan Health Authority and St. Paul's Hospital. Admissions for fall 2026 are underway with sustained high interest. [Read more](#).

Learners can now apply to be part of the province's first [occupational therapy](#) and [speech-language pathology](#) training programs. 12 faculty members, including inaugural program chairs, have been recruited to lead curriculum development and have initiated research programs this fall. Engagement with the clinical communities is ongoing to support the implementation of these new programs. [Read more](#).

USASK LAUNCHES CANADA'S FIRST TWO-YEAR MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING PROGRAM

The Master of Public Health Nursing program is a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the USask College of Nursing and School of Public Health. The two-year online program equips nurses with advanced skills to address urgent public health challenges—from poverty reduction to disease prevention. Students will gain expertise as both practitioners and researchers through a combination of coursework and a thesis. The program is designed to be flexible and accessible - students do not need to reside in Saskatoon, and courses are delivered online with some live seminars. Applications are now open. The first cohort begins September 2026.

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

There are no recent appointments to report for this period.

Active Searches & Reviews

We are in the early stages of the following searches and reviews (full committees still being populated):

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.