

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

September 2026

As we begin the fall term, the University of Saskatchewan's campuses are alive with purpose and possibility. The return of students, faculty, and staff brings a renewed sense of connection that strengthens the work we carry forward together.

USask continues to be a place where people feel they belong and where their aspirations are supported by a community committed to learning, discovery, and respectful partnership. The energy across our classrooms, labs, clinics, and gathering spaces reflects a university focused on impact and guided by shared values.

UPLAN 2035

We began the process to develop USask's next strategic plan, UPlan 2035, in March 2026. The planning process was designed to be broad, evidence-informed, and implementation-oriented. To date, we have engaged 3,500 people on campus through campus conversations and surveys. We have also spoken with close to 200 industry leaders, government officials, (provincial, municipal and federal), Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous leaders and community members, donors, alumni, and community partners.

An extensive qualitative analysis of these data, including more than 17,000 data points, has informed an emerging vision, mission, set of priorities, and implementation plan. The process emphasized listening first, synthesizing evidence, and then shaping priorities through iterative leadership, governance, and stakeholder engagement. With the development phase nearing completion, we are shifting into the validation phase.

The most dominant theme to emerge through the process is the idea of local-to-global, which suggests that USask's leadership on global level stems from its connections with Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is where we build relationships, understand needs, test ideas, develop talent, and create solutions. The local context of Saskatchewan includes the diverse people and cultures of Saskatchewan, the relationships we have with Indigenous

peoples and the province's industries, environments, challenges, and opportunities. Overall, Saskatchewan gives USask distinctive strengths and responsibilities that enable us to contribute ideas, people, and global solutions.

The next stage of the process will involve additional synthesis and refinement through discussions with student and academic leadership and governance bodies. The intention is to complete the process in time to formally launch in January 2027.

STRATEGIC FINANCING

In early September, we announced that the Board of Governors approved a strategic financing approach that will allow USask to pursue up to \$250 million in new capital financing. This has also gone through the provincial approval process. This approval reflects confidence in the university's operational financial stewardship and enables USask to raise capital funding to self-finance immediate and long-term priorities that strengthen and expand our learning spaces, renew our systems, and advance research and innovation.

Our financing aligns with responsible infrastructure planning. These capital funds will advance several major initiatives, including the Integrated Services Renewal project, which will modernize essential systems that support students, faculty, and staff. It will also enable renewal and expansion of teaching and learning spaces, supporting growth in the College of Engineering and the Edwards School of Business, and create expanded and new opportunities in nuclear medicine and healthcare. The university will self-finance these projects through a bond structure without requiring provincial capital funding or relying on core operating funds supporting the academy and our existing services.

FIVE YEARS OF OHPAHOTÂN | OOHPAAHOTAAN

August 20 marked five years since ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan was gifted to USask. Units across campus have now completed progress reports that reflect achievements, challenges, and opportunities for continued growth. The Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement has compiled 22 reports that document how the seven commitments are being translated into action and how the strategy continues to guide our work.

The reporting process reinforces a culture of accountability and highlights the importance of creating safer, more inclusive environments. It also acknowledges that racism remains a reality that must be addressed through collective effort and sustained leadership.

NEW OT AND SLP PROGRAMS

A major milestone for Saskatchewan's health-care system arrived with the launch of the province's first Master of Occupational Therapy and Master of Speech-Language Pathology programs at USask. These programs, housed within the School of Rehabilitation Science, welcomed their inaugural cohorts this fall.

The Government of Saskatchewan has invested \$37 million to establish these programs, which will train 80 students each year and significantly expand provincial capacity. Students have spoken about the importance of learning in their home province and gaining experience in rural, urban, and Indigenous communities. These programs will strengthen access to essential services and support the Patients First Health Care Plan and the Health Human Resource Action Plan.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND RECOGNITION

Royal Society of Canada Recognition

Two USask researchers, Dr. Daniel Chen (PhD) and Dr. Tara Kahan (PhD), have been honoured by the Royal Society of Canada. Chen's leadership in bioprinting and regenerative medicine and Kahan's groundbreaking work in environmental analytical chemistry reflect the strength of USask's research community and its contributions to global challenges.

Canadian Academy of Health Sciences Fellowship

Dr. Valerie Verge (PhD) has been named a fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. Her work on nerve repair and therapeutic Acute Intermittent Hypoxia continues to shape new possibilities for people living with neurological conditions.

International Nuclear Research Agreement

USask has signed a new agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to advance nuclear research, education, and training. This partnership builds on existing strengths in nuclear medicine, energy systems, and policy, supported by facilities such as the Saskatchewan Cyclotron Facility and the Canadian Light Source.

Schulich Leaders

Two incoming USask students have received one of Canada's top undergraduate STEM scholarships. Matthew Craddock and Clarenz Portades have been named USask's 2026 Schulich Leaders. They are part of the fifteenth cohort of Schulich Leaders, a group of 100 high school graduates from across Canada who are recognized for their academic strength,

leadership, and commitment to making a positive impact in their communities. Their selection reflects the quality of students who choose USask and the learning environment that encourages curiosity, service, and innovation.

GIVING DAY

On September 9, USask Giving Day 2026 highlighted the impact of philanthropy. The broader USask community raised \$376,495 in support of students, research, and programs. This represents a 22 per cent increase from Giving Day 2025.

In total, 676 alumni, faculty, staff, students, and friends contributed to more than 120 initiatives across campus, a 13 per cent increase in donors compared to last year. These results reflect growing momentum in community engagement and demonstrate how generosity continues to strengthen opportunities for learners and researchers across USask.

HUSKIE ATHLETICS

Homecoming 2026 was a celebration of community spirit and Huskie pride. Thousands gathered at Griffiths Stadium to cheer on Huskie Football as they delivered a decisive 44–24 win over the Calgary Dinos. The game showcased the talent and determination of our student-athletes and created a memorable experience for students, alumni, and supporters. Homecoming continues to be an important moment that brings our community together and highlights the strength of Huskie Athletics.

CLOSING REMARKS

The period from July through early September has shown a university that is focused, collaborative, and committed to meaningful impact. From the launch of the fall term to major investments in infrastructure, Indigenous engagement, health-care training, and research excellence, USask continues to demonstrate leadership across Saskatchewan and beyond.

Guided by UPlan 2035, we will continue our work toward a unified vision and a successful future for USask. Thank you for the dedication you bring to your work and for the support you offer to our students, colleagues, and partners. I look forward to continuing our shared efforts to strengthen the University of Saskatchewan and to build on the momentum we are creating together.