



Interim Provost's Report to Council

September 2026

GENERAL REMARKS

Welcome back to Fall Term. I hope you all had a rejuvenating and productive summer.

Fall Term is always an exciting time on all our campuses, with plenty of opportunities to re-connect with colleagues and friends. I wish you all a successful semester ahead as we begin another exciting academic year.

Before I begin my updates, I would like to acknowledge that a dear colleague, Russ Isinger, has retired after 17 years of service as University Registrar and 23 years in the University Registrar's Office. He held the position of University Registrar beginning in 2009 and served as a political studies lecturer in the College of Arts and Science and at St. Thomas More College over many years. We are very thankful for the key role Russ played in leading the systems and services that have supported students and the academic mission of the University of Saskatchewan. Russ will be remembered at USask for the profound impact he left on the teams in the Registrar's Office and the broader Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience units. He has also been an ever present and strong contributor to academic governance through University Council and University Senate. I want to extend my deepest wishes for a wonderful retirement to Russ. (We remain hopeful that there may still be some epic Russ Halloween costumes in the post-retirement era.)

As we gather in a new academic year, it is fitting to reflect on the progress we have made together in advancing meaningful institutional priorities and changes over the summer months.

Five years of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan

In late August, we marked five years since USask received the gift of the Indigenous Strategy, ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan. I am encouraged by the meaningful progress made across the University of Saskatchewan and grateful to the Indigenous communities, leaders, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, students, faculty, and staff who continue to guide this work. The recent reporting process conducted within colleges, schools and units, with guidance from the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement, highlighted a shift

from individual initiatives to more systemic change. The report submitted from the [Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic](#) outlines how we are working to ensure that Indigenous priorities are increasingly embedded in how we teach, support student success, build community relationships, and make institution-wide decisions.

[The 22 published reports](#) from across USask units demonstrate important advances in expanding pathways for Indigenous learners, strengthening partnerships with Indigenous communities, and integrating Indigenous perspectives and pedagogies throughout the university. At the same time, they remind us that this work is ongoing and requires continued accountability, partnership, and a shared commitment to creating the conditions for Indigenous success before, during, and beyond the university experience. I am proud of the progress achieved over the past five years and remain committed to advancing the seven commitments of *ohpahotân* | *oohpaahotaan* in the years ahead.

Additionally, the Week of Reflection and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation will be recognized at USask from September 28 to October 2, remembering and honouring residential school survivors and their families. All faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to participate in events and access learning resources throughout the week. Everyone is also invited to wear an orange shirt for the week beginning September 28 as a message to yourself and others that you are committed to taking action. [Find more information at *indigenous.usask.ca*.](#)

Bookstore resources for students

As we begin a new academic year, I want to highlight the Shop USask Bookstore located on the Saskatoon campus and how it supports students in their academic journey. Shop USask carries a range of resources and materials that directly benefit current students, including textbooks, course supplies, and other academic resources. The Shop USask Bookstore provides convenient access to academic resources for students with its central campus location, and limits mark up on textbooks and course materials, in all possible circumstances, to keep prices affordable for students.

Through sales, Shop USask plays an important role in supporting various priorities and initiatives at USask, including strategic university goals. USask financial practices direct all Consumer Services, including the Bookstore, to support the USask Strategic Initiatives Fund (SIF). Funds are awarded each year based on strategic plan priorities to academic, research, capital, and other institutional priority areas. 5% of ancillary revenue is contributed to the SIF from Consumer Services. In 2026/27, approximately \$0.3M from Retail Services (5% of \$6.3M budgeted revenue) from the sale of both course materials and general merchandise

will be allocated to the SIF. By using the Shop USask Bookstore for course materials and resource needs, this financial support directly improves USask for future generations of students.

Whelen Visiting Lectureship

I would also like to share with you that the Office of the Provost and VP Academic has been in the early stages of relaunching the [Whelen Lectureship Series](#), a visiting lectureship opportunity that brings distinguished global thinkers, innovators, and leaders to USask to share ideas that challenge perspectives, spark conversation, and inspire action. At the last event in 2019, Roberta Bondar, Canada's first female astronaut and the first neurologist in space, brought her expertise and perspective from her time in space.

Currently, we are searching for a 2027 speaker that inspires and engages both our USask audiences and the general public. The lecturer should be an individual with an international reputation in their field of knowledge and can be in any discipline relevant to the programs of studies available at the University of Saskatchewan. If you have a suggestion you would like to submit, please visit this [Microsoft Forms link](#). We thank you in advance for your suggestions.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Whelen Lectureship Steering Committee: Loleen Berdahl (Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic), Lindsey Banco (College of Arts and Science), Douglas Clark (School of Environment and Sustainability), Leah Ferguson (College of Kinesiology), Nicole Fernandez (Western College of Veterinary Medicine), Dev Mishra (Edwards School of Business), Peter Phillips (Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy), and Jaswant Singh (College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies).

USASK UPDATES

TRUST INVESTMENTS TO PROVIDE MORE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

To better support students and their financial well-being, USask will be increasing the spend rate on donor trusts from 3.75 to 4.75 per cent in order to provide more funding for student scholarships and support programs. The change was formally approved by the Board of Governors at the summer meetings on June 23. The increased support for students will also move USask up significantly from the bottom quartile to joining the top U15 institutions, in terms of their spend rates from trusts.

DEAN APPOINTMENT, COLLEGE OF LAW

Dr. Ibironke Odumosu-Ayanu (PhD) has been appointed as dean of the College of Law for a five-year term, beginning October 1, 2026. A member of the college since 2008, Dr. Odumosu-Ayanu currently serves as a professor and as associate dean, research and graduate studies. She holds an LLB from the University of Lagos, an LLM from the University of Calgary, and a PhD from the University of British Columbia. An internationally recognized scholar whose research focuses on business and human rights, international investment law, and natural resource governance, she has built collaborative research partnerships across Canada and internationally. Throughout her career at USask, Dr. Odumosu-Ayanu has also been a dedicated teacher, mentor, and leader. Her appointment as dean reflects a distinguished record of academic excellence, collaborative leadership, and dedication to advancing research and graduate education. She will build on the college's strong reputation for excellence in legal education and research while advancing Indigenous legal scholarship and strengthening engagement with local and global communities. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Odumosu-Ayanu on this appointment.

I want to extend my thanks and gratitude to Professor Doug Surtees, who stepped into the role of interim dean in July. Dr. Odumosu-Ayanu will assume the role on October 1, following a transition period supported by Interim Dean Doug Surtees, who will continue serving through September.

DEAN APPOINTMENT, ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE

As announced by Dr. Carl Still (PhD), president of St. Thomas More College (STM), in July 2026, Dr. Sarah Knudson (PhD) has been appointed as the next Dean of STM for a five-year term, effective July 1, 2026. She is an accomplished teacher and scholar, with noted strengths in teaching, research, and student supervision. Over the course of her 14 years at STM, she has taught 11 courses in Sociology and Interdisciplinary Studies, three of which she created, and is a prolific researcher of families, gender, intimate relationships, and life transitions. She is the co-editor of *Committing Sociology*, which is widely used as a core sociology text in Canadian universities, and has received nominations for both the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union Teaching Excellence Award and the STM Teaching Excellence Award.

Dr. Knudson's official installation took place on September 9, 2026, at St. Thomas More College. I wish Dr. Knudson all the best in her term.

ACADEMIC HEALTH SCIENCES FALL 2026 UPDATE

A first phase of renovations in the Health Sciences Building has reached key milestones as part of the university's broader space optimization initiative to support new and expanding health sciences programs funded through Saskatchewan's Health Human Resources Action Plan, particularly for the School of Rehabilitation Science (SRS) and the new occupational therapy (MOT) and speech-language pathology (MSLP) programs. Beginning Aug. 27, 2026, several newly renovated spaces are expected to become available for use, providing new teaching, learning, study, and support spaces for students, faculty, and staff, including:

- dedicated teaching and learning spaces on the first floor of B-Wing to support the distinct curriculum requirements of the MOT and MSLP programs, including rooms for specialized equipment, breakout rooms, and teaching support spaces for the SRS;
- an updated SRS administration area;
- a new student work and study room where students can gather, collaborate, and work between classes; and
- accessibility-focused upgrades on the third floor of E-Wing, including a companion-care, barrier-free washroom and an inclusive student change and locker room featuring private change spaces and secure lockers.

Construction has progressed through planned phases while efforts have been made to minimize disruption to teaching, learning, and research activities. Work remains underway on additional components of the space optimization project, including further work into 2027. Updates can be found at healthsciences.usask.ca.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY FALL 2026 UPDATE

As of September 1, 2026, USask Library introduced new service desk hours across its locations, aligned more closely with periods of highest demand. The After Hours Study program (formerly Late Night Study) has expanded to include the Health Sciences Library, joining existing after-hours spaces at Murray Library and the Law Library. The expansion of this program was made possible through a continued partnership with the USSU Student Crew, helping provide students with additional access to safe study space during evenings and weekends. USask Library is also preparing to launch a new self-checkout app and kiosk service that will make borrowing library materials faster and more convenient. More information about these services will be announced soon. All library users are encouraged to [review the updated hours](#) before visiting and check the library website for all the ways USask Library supports teaching, learning, and research at USask.

COLLEGE AND SCHOOL UPDATES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

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

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY RECEIVES ECO CANADA ACCREDITATION

The School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) has received ECO Canada accreditation for three of its professional graduate programs: the Master of Water Security, the Master of Sustainability in Regenerative Sustainability, and the Master of Sustainability in Energy Security degrees. ECO Canada accreditation provides independent recognition that the programs meet national standards for post-secondary environmental education and demonstrate a commitment to educational quality, continuous improvement, accountability, and alignment with environmental-sector competencies and workforce needs. On June 5, 2026, SENS was formally advised that the Canadian Environmental Accreditation Commission had finalized its decision and awarded conditional accreditation to these three graduate programs for a two-year term, effective May 26, 2026. To receive a seven-year accreditation, SENS has begun establishing required program-specific curriculum review committees, including developing terms of reference and appointing members from within and external to SENS and the university. Once this requirement has been met, the programs will be awarded the remainder of the standard accreditation term.

This achievement strengthens the national profile of SENS and USask in professional environmental and sustainability education. It reflects the collective efforts of SENS faculty, staff, students, program leadership, and community and industry partners to develop and continually improve relevant, high-quality programs.

COLLEGE OF KINESIOLOGY PARTNERS WITH PLYR ATHLETICS

USask Recreation and the College of Kinesiology are proud to strengthen their connection with the local community through a new five-year relationship with PLYR Athletics, a Saskatoon-based business with strong ties to the University of Saskatchewan.

This relationship reflects a shared commitment to supporting the USask community and creating meaningful connections between the university, its alumni, and local businesses. As part of the agreement, PLYR Athletics has made a significant gift to support USask Recreation and its ongoing efforts to provide quality recreation opportunities and experiences for students, staff, and the broader campus community.

COLLEGE OF LAW FALL 2026 UPDATE

The College of Law is continuing its work in helping Canadians build a more assessable justice system. Brea Lowenberger, director of the CREATE Justice research centre at the College of Law, played a key role in supporting the recent *Advancing People-Centred Justice in Canada* conference, hosted in Ottawa by the National Action Committee on Access to Justice. At the event, Supreme Court of Canada Justice, Andromache Karakatsanis, described an accessible justice system as a public good, just as health care is essential public infrastructure. This fall, the College of Law McKercher LLP lecture series features three speakers with a focus on access to justice. The lecture titles are: "Democracy and Deference", evaluating limits on rights essential to democracy; "Moving Forward After *Cowichan*", on finding a path forward following a court ruling that Cowichan Nation holds unextinguished Aboriginal title on certain lands in BC; and "Pregnancy, Personhood, and the Equality of Women", examining whether pregnant women should occupy a distinct category of moral and legal personhood.

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE FALL 2026 UPDATE

Physician Assistant Studies:

The first cohort of [Master of Physician Assistant Studies](#) (MPAS) learners has started clinical placements in communities across Saskatchewan, including Humboldt, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Melville, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon and Swift Current. This is another significant milestone for the program and for the growth of the physician assistant profession in the province.

In August, the program welcomed its second cohort of 20 learners. The MPAS program emphasizes strong connections to Saskatchewan, with 85 per cent of first-year students from the province, and 20 per cent with rural roots. [Read more.](#)

School of Rehabilitation Science (SRS):

The School of Rehabilitation Science has launched the [Master of Occupational Therapy](#) and [Master of Speech-Language Pathology](#) programs. For the first time, students can study occupational therapy (OT) and speech-language pathology (SLP) without leaving the province for their education.

On August 27, 40 OT and 40 SLP students joined 55 physical therapy students in a pinning ceremony welcoming them to their professions. This event also celebrated the years of advocacy, collaboration, and work that made these programs possible. Establishing the OT

and SLP programs at USask expands student training opportunities and will help meet the need for rehabilitation professionals and services in Saskatchewan. [Read more.](#)

Undergraduate Medical Education:

To expand medical training capacity, the college has added 20 undergraduate medical training seats. This summer, 128 learners began their medical training, including 52 at the Regina campus and 76 at the Saskatoon campus.

The college has also launched the Rural Opportunities and Ongoing Training in Saskatchewan (ROOTS) pathway to strengthen medical education in communities across the province. Learners in the ROOTS pathway will complete their third year at a Saskatchewan Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship site (Estevan, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Melfort) or Prince Albert site and will have increased opportunity to train in rural and regional communities throughout their medical education.

SCHULICH LEADERS

Incoming USask students Matthew Craddock and Clarenz Portades have been named USask's 2026 Schulich Leader Scholarship recipients. The Schulich Leader Scholarship is one of Canada's top undergraduate STEM scholarships. Through the Schulich Foundation, students pursuing engineering receive \$120,000 and students studying science, technology, or mathematics receive \$100,000 to attend one of 20 partner universities across Canada. Clarenz, a graduate of Bishop James Mahoney High School in Saskatoon, plans to focus on computer science, software engineering and computer engineering, while Matthew, from Spencerville, Ontario, plans to study mechanical engineering.

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Marjorie Delbaere has been extended as Interim Vice-Provost, Students and Learning, beginning January 1, 2027 up to June 30, 2027 or until a new Vice-Provost, Students and Learning is appointed, whichever comes first.

Dr. Louise Racine has been appointed as Acting Dean, College of Nursing, to cover for Dr. Solina Richter's administration leave beginning January 1, 2027 to June 30, 2027.

Dr. Loleen Berdahl has been extended as Acting Deputy Provost, beginning October 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2027 or until a new Deputy Provost is appointed, whichever occurs first.

Dr. Ibironke Odumosu-Ayanu has been appointed as Dean, College of Law, for a five-year term, beginning October 1, 2026 up to September 30, 2031.

Dr. Amrinderbir Singh has been extended as Interim Associate Dean, Academic, College of Dentistry, beginning September 1, 2026 up to February 28, 2027.

Dr. Nazmi Sari has been appointed as Acting Head, Department of Economics, College of Arts and Science, for a six-month term, beginning September 1, 2026.

Dr. Greg Malin has been appointed as Acting Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, College of Medicine, to cover for Dr. McKague's leave for an initial period beginning August 16, 2026, up to October 15, 2026.

Dr. Ryan Walker has been appointed as Interim Associate Dean, Collegial Processes, College of Arts and Science, for a period up to eleven months, beginning August 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2027.

Dr. Sven Achenbach has been extended as Interim Associate Dean, Faculty Relations, College of Engineering, beginning July 1, 2026 up to December 31, 2026.

Dr. Maureen Bourassa has been extended as Associate Dean, Academic, Edwards School of Business, beginning July 1, 2026 up to December 31, 2029.

Dr. Allison Cammer has been appointed as Assistant Dean with Nutrition and Dietetics, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2031.

Dr. Bobbi Helgason has been appointed as Head, Department of Soil Science, College of Agriculture and Bioresources, for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 and up to June 30, 2031.

Tim Hutchinson has been appointed as Assistant Dean, University Archives and Special Collections, for a three-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2029.

Dr. Andrew Ireson has been appointed as Assistant Director, Academic Internal, School of Environment and Sustainability, for a three-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2029.

Dr. David Kraichy has been appointed as Head, Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour, Edwards School of Business, for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2031.

Dr. Ed Krol has been appointed as Interim Dean, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, beginning July 1, 2026 up to December 31, 2026 or until a new Dean is appointed, whichever occurs first.

Dr. Gordon Martell has been appointed as Associate Dean, Indigenous, College of Education, for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2031.

Dr. Jo Ann Murphy has been renewed as Assistant Dean, Learning and Curriculum Support, University Library, for a term up to one-year, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2027.

Dr. Steven Rayan was extended as Interim Vice-Dean, Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work, College of Arts and Science, beginning July 1, 2026 up to August 31, 2026.

Dr. Scot Stone has been appointed as Head, Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology, College of Medicine, for a three-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2029.

Doug Surtees was appointed as Interim Dean, College of Law, beginning July 1, 2026 up to September 30, 2026.

Dr. Fan Yang has been appointed as Acting Head, Department of Finance and Management Science, Edwards School of Business, for a one-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2027.

Dr. Lifeng Zhang has been appointed as Head, Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, College of Engineering, for a five-year term, beginning July 1, 2026 up to June 30, 2031.

ACTIVE SEARCHES AND REVIEWS

Searches:

- Dean, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition

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