UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Provost's Report to Council

November 2026

GENERAL REMARKS

It is my honour to submit my first report to University Council as USask's Provost and Vice-President Academic. I am deeply committed to this university and to the people who learn, work, and live their lives here, and I look forward to our continued work together to support USask's academic mission. Thank you to all who were able to attend the reception on October 28. It was pleasure to spend time with you.

It is the work of many people who drive our ongoing progress and our outstanding academic programs at USask. Below are selected highlights and recent updates from teams within the provost's portfolio.

USASK MILESTONES AND PROJECT UPDATES

TWO-HOUR EXAM PILOT PROJECT

During Fall Term 2026, the Registrar's Office introduced the option for instructors to select two-hour examinations instead of traditional three-hour exams. This pilot project was initiated to address a commitment made in the newly approved assessment policy. The team is happy to report that there was significant uptake of the two-hour exam option, with 35 per cent of instructors opting for the shorter duration. As a result of this successful pilot project, the Fall Term examination window is one full day shorter than in previous years with an end date of December 22, allowing increased flexibility prior to the holiday season.

The combination of both two-hour and three-hour exam durations, alongside an increased number of in-person exams for online classes, presented unique challenges for the scheduling team. We thank them for their hard work during this pilot project and extend our gratitude to the teams who worked hard to implement this trial of new assessment options across campus.

HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION EXPANSION UPDATE

Since 2019, USask has expanded health-professional education across 13 programs, introducing eight new ones and expanding five. This growth is creating more opportunities for learners in Saskatchewan while increasing USask's capacity to educate future health professionals. Eight new programs are creating educational and career pathways that were not previously available through USask, including occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, physician assistant studies, international dental degree training, dental therapy, dental assisting, dental hygiene, and periodontology. Nursing, nurse practitioner, undergraduate medicine, physical therapy, and clinical psychology have also expanded.

When the new and expanded programs reach full implementation, USask's annual health-professional learner capacity is expected to grow from approximately 530 learners before the expansions to nearly 900. The additional capacity will create opportunities for hundreds of additional learners each year through targeted Government of Saskatchewan investments in health-professional education, along with growth through the USask College of Dentistry.

EXPANDING WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR USASK STUDENTS

In its first year participating in CEWIL Canada's iHUB, USask secured $518,100 through three successful projects, supporting 381 student work-integrated learning experiences across Pharmacy, Physical Therapy and Engineering. iHUB supports high-quality curricular work-integrated learning that expands access, reduces barriers to participation, and creates innovative opportunities for learning through community and industry partnerships.

At USask, this investment supported authentic experiential learning where students apply their knowledge in real-world settings, develop professional and transferable competencies, and learn alongside community and industry partners. The funding also reduced financial barriers associated with required placements and other applied learning experiences, helping students access learning opportunities across Saskatchewan, including in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

EXPANDED ACCESS TO STUDENT AI TOOLS

Effective October 26, eligible USask students gained access to an expanded suite of artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support learning, studying, research, and academic work. The initiative provides both no-cost and optional paid AI services, while also emphasizing responsible use, privacy, security, and AI literacy. USask has reviewed the available tools

with privacy, security, and responsible-use considerations in mind. Students can compare available tools, review licensing information, and learn more about access and purchasing options through the PAWS AI Tools channel (NSID login required).

Recognizing that effective AI use requires more than access to technology, USask has also expanded AI literacy resources. Students are encouraged to complete foundational AI literacy training and a new Student AI Literacy Tutorial designed to help them critically evaluate AI systems, understand their impacts, and make informed decisions about their use in academic and professional contexts. The university continues to emphasize that AI use must align with course-specific requirements, instructor guidance, academic integrity expectations, and student guidelines for responsible AI use.

Additional related note: At the November 19th meeting of University Council, I plan to provide a verbal update on progress towards a series of AI Campus Dialogues that I am now working on with several University Council Chairs.

MACLEAN'S UNIVERSITY RANKINGS AND METHODOLOGY UPDATE

As mentioned at the October 22 Council meeting, the Maclean's University Rankings have undergone a significant methodology update that places USask within a tier of mid-sized universities with 10,000-30,000 students, rather than the previous long-standing medical-doctoral, comprehensive and primarily undergraduate categories. USask placed sixth out of nineteen among this new tier and remained particularly strong in research impact and reputation.

USask analyzes many national and international rankings to confirm areas of strength and to identify potential areas for improvement, and the Maclean's ranking methodology changes make this year's results an important reset point for future comparisons and analysis. Although rankings do not drive strategic decision-making, USask pays attention to multiple rankings systems and continues to focus on what is important to our students, our province and our stakeholders, including investments into student experience, interdisciplinary approaches, Indigenization, and collaborative teaching and research.

LIBRARY PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS LITERACY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A partnership between the University Library and a non-profit organization, Foundations Learning & Skills Saskatchewan, is supporting elementary students' reading skills while providing USask students with valuable volunteer opportunities. As part of the Literacies in Community partnership, USask student volunteers complete training and can serve as reading guides who offer one-on-one literacy support sessions to elementary school

children over an eight-week period, coordinated through Foundations Learning's Spark program that supports children in Grades 2 to 4 in building foundational skills for learning, school, and everyday life. The Literacies in Community partnership recruited USask student volunteers until November 18 for the upcoming winter session, which will run from January through March 2027.

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.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE LAUNCHES STRATEGY AND CULTURE CO-DESIGN PROCESS

On October 29, 2026, the College of Arts and Science launched a college-wide strategy and culture co-design process as part of its ongoing academic and organizational renewal. Recognizing the challenges facing the College, this initiative creates an opportunity for faculty, staff, and students to shape a shared direction for the future. Facilitated by Tidal Equality, the process will move through five phases— Voicing, Learning, Co-Design, Refining, and Sharing—beginning with leadership conversations and expanding to community-wide listening and collaborative design opportunities in 2027. Grounded in the College's commitment to education, research, discovery, and the public good, the initiative will draw on the diverse perspectives, expertise, and imagination of its community to identify shared priorities and strengthen its culture. The process will culminate in the launch of a strategy and culture framework created by the College, for the College, anticipated in September 2027.

NINE EDWARDS STUDENTS RECEIVE OVER $20,000 IN 2026 CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the Edwards Co-operative Education Program, business students complete 8 to 12-month work placements that provide practical, industry-relevant experience and help prepare them for future careers. Following their placements, the Edwards School of Business hosts its annual Co-op Open House, bringing together students and employers to celebrate the success of the program and explore future opportunities. This year, nine students were recognized for outstanding achievement during their work terms. Together, they received $20,400 in scholarship support across five award categories, including two student-nominated and three employer-nominated awards. These awards celebrate the impact of experiential learning and the dedication of students in applying classroom

knowledge to real-world business environments. Congratulations to Nandita Anand, McKenna Giasson, Chance Happy, Carter Campbell, Annika Huber, Alina Rizvi, Alleyna Woods, Owen Twamley, and Levi Rosenberg on their well-deserved recognition.

EDWARDS RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP MEASURES ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Edwards School of Business partnered with Prairieland Park on a student-supported economic impact study of the 2026 Western Canadian Crop Production Show. The BRIDGE Knowledge Centre led the initial survey and helped establish a partnership that has since expanded into a broader assessment led by Dr. Craig Wilson and postdoctoral fellow Dr. Tam Tran. While the initial study has been completed, additional research is underway and will continue over the next year. The initial research found the event generated more than $1.1 billion in commercial activity and contributed over $3.5 million to Saskatoon's economy, demonstrating applied business research's value for industry decision-making and real-world impact measurement. The partnership shows how USask connects research, teaching, and community engagement to address real-world challenges. Read more about the study results here.

NEWLY RENOVATED NUTRIEN LECTURE THEATRE OPEN IN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The College of Engineering recently celebrated the grand opening of the Nutrien Lecture Theatre, supported through Nutrien's transformational $15-million gift to USask's *Be What the World Needs* campaign last year. The renovated lecture theatre features improved accessibility, enhanced acoustics, and movable walls and seating to support teaching and learning excellence for years to come. The theatre accommodates 116 seats and marks a significant investment in the academic and learning environments of the Engineering Building.

COLLEGE OF NURSING ACCREDITATION

The College of Nursing has been awarded the highest possible accreditation outcome from the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, receiving a seven-year accreditation term (September 2026 to September 2033) for its educational unit and both the Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs. The review recognized the strength of the college's province-wide nursing education model, including the breadth and diversity of student learning opportunities across Saskatchewan and the strong partnerships that support program delivery. All accreditation standards were met, with reviewers highlighting strengths in interprofessional learning opportunities and ongoing curriculum renewal. The outcome reflects the collective contributions of faculty,

staff, students, clinical partners, Indigenous knowledge holders, and regional college partners, while also providing recommendations that will support the college's continued commitment to excellence and continuous improvement in nursing education.

WESTERN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE COMMUNITY REPORT

In October, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine released its annual community report for 2025–26. In her welcome message, WCVM Dean Dr. Gillian Muir highlighted the tremendous response from western Canadian veterinary clinics to hosting the college's 88 senior veterinary students for a new four-week primary care experience rotation this spring and summer. The report also offers an update on the WCVM's essential expansion planning activities, which received a $500,000 boost from the Government of Saskatchewan in March 2026. The full report is available on the WCVM website.

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Stephen Manning has been appointed as Acting Dean, Western College of Veterinary Medicine, to cover for Dr. Gillian Muir's administration leave beginning January 1, 2027 to June 30, 2027.

Dr. Jim Barton has been appointed as Vice-Dean, Education, College of Medicine, beginning January 1, 2027 to December 31, 2032.

Dr. George Mutwiri has been extended as Executive Director, School of Public Health, beginning November 1, 2026 up to April 30, 2028.

ACTIVE SEARCHES AND REVIEWS

Searches:

- Dean, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition
- Executive Director, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy

Please see here for information on searches and reviews.