UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

November 2026

I want to start by thanking all our faculty and staff for their hard work that supports teaching, research, and administration at this university. This month has given us opportunities to celebrate significant milestones, recognize outstanding contributions to our university and society, and reflect on the values that connect us as a community.

I continue to be excited by the accomplishments of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Through a shared commitment to excellence in teaching, research, community engagement, and service, we continue to be a university that is creating positive change in Saskatchewan and beyond.

UPLAN 2035 UPDATE

As part of the process seeking endorsement from University Council, materials have been submitted to the Planning and Priorities Committee of Council.

We continue to prepare for implementation of UPlan 2035, which will begin in early 2027. As part of this preparation, we have developed an assessment framework that will be shared with University Council, and we have begun to discuss the structure of supporting plans. The intention is to have subsequent plans be action-oriented.

FALL CONVOCATION

USask celebrated Fall Convocation on Nov. 10, when 946 students received 972 degrees, certificates, and diplomas and joined a global community of more than 180,000 USask alumni.

Convocation is an important milestone for our graduates and their families, recognizing years of dedication, perseverance, and academic achievement. It also serves as a reminder

of the impact our graduates have in communities across Saskatchewan, Canada, and around the world through their leadership, service, and innovation.

In my October report, I noted that distinguished alumnus Tim Gitzel would be receiving an honorary degree from the university. During Fall Convocation, USask formally conferred this honour in recognition of his exceptional leadership as President and Chief Executive Officer of Cameco, his contributions to Canada's resource sector, and his longstanding commitment to supporting student success, educational opportunity, and community development.

His accomplishments exemplify the impact that USask graduates can have both locally and globally and reflect the university's commitment to recognizing individuals whose leadership and service have made significant contributions to society.

PROVOST AND VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC

I am pleased to note that Dr. Patricia (Patti) McDougall (PhD) officially began her five-year term as Provost and Vice-President Academic on Nov. 1. With nearly three decades of service to USask in academic and leadership roles, Patti brings extensive experience, institutional knowledge, and a deep commitment to academic excellence and student success.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with Patti as we advance the university's priorities and prepare for the launch of UPlan 2035. Her leadership will be instrumental in supporting the continued growth and success of our academic mission.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

USask continues to foster research excellence while supporting students and faculty whose work is making meaningful contributions to society.

At Fall Convocation, Dr. Carey Simonson (PhD), professor in the College of Engineering, received the USask Distinguished Researcher Award in recognition of his significant contributions to research, teaching, and mentorship. An internationally recognized expert in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning technologies, Simonson has advanced more energy-efficient and sustainable heating and cooling systems while helping to train and mentor the next generation of engineers and researchers.

Two outstanding students were also honoured at Fall Convocation for their exceptional academic achievement. Dr. Amir Khajavinia (PhD, PharmD) from the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition received the Governor General's Gold Medal, one of Canada's most prestigious academic honours for graduate students, recognizing his exceptional scholarly achievement and doctoral research developing highly sensitive methods to detect and measure psilocin, a compound being studied for its potential applications in mental health treatment. Kayla Delainey was also recognized for exceptional academic achievement with the President's Medal. A graduate of both Education and Studio Art, she embodies the breadth of a USask education and is now inspiring the next generation through her work as an elementary school teacher.

USask researchers also received national recognition through new and renewed Canada Research Chairs. Dr. Edmond Sanganyado (PhD) was named Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Exposure Science and Environmental Risk, supporting research into innovative methods of identifying and mitigating chemical contaminants in the environment. Dr. Michael Wozny (PhD) was named Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Protein Science for Pathogen Defence, advancing our understanding of cellular protein structure to aid the development of new approaches to combat viruses and bacteria. Dr. Kristina Bidwell's (PhD) Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Applied Indigenous Storytelling was renewed, recognizing her leadership in research exploring storytelling, Indigenous histories, and connections between communities.

These accomplishments reflect the quality and breadth of research taking place across USask and highlight the university's continued success in attracting, developing, and supporting outstanding students and researchers.

CAMPUS INVESTMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

USask continues to invest in spaces, partnerships, and initiatives that support learning, discovery, and community engagement.

This month, the university celebrated the grand opening of the newly redeveloped University Archives and Special Collections in Murray Library. The new space includes a secure, climate-controlled preservation vault, expanded reading and research areas, exhibition space, teaching facilities, and collaborative workspaces. The project represents a significant investment in preserving collections of regional and national significance while improving access for students, researchers, and community members.

The university also celebrated the opening of the Nutrien Engineering Lecture Theatre, a modern learning space supported through Nutrien's landmark $15-million investment in USask. The renovated theatre features enhanced learning technologies and teaching infrastructure that will support student success and help prepare future engineers for careers in Saskatchewan and around the world.

Building on this longstanding partnership, USask also celebrated the grand opening of the Nutrien Centre for Digital Agriculture and the kihci-okâwîmâw askiy (Great Mother Earth) Knowledge Centre. These initiatives will strengthen teaching, research, and community engagement while advancing innovation in agriculture, Indigenous knowledge, and sustainable food systems.

Together, these investments reflect the power of philanthropy and partnership in creating new opportunities for students, researchers, and communities while strengthening the university's ability to address challenges of local and global importance.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

On Nov. 11, members of the USask community gathered to mark Remembrance Day. This year's observance included the university's 98th annual wreath-laying ceremony and was held in Convocation Hall due to ongoing construction near the Memorial Gates. While the ceremony was held in Convocation Hall, it remained closely connected to the university's traditions of remembrance through its proximity to the Roll of Honour, which commemorates students, faculty, and staff who answered the call to serve.

USask has a long and proud legacy of service. Generations of students, faculty, staff, graduates, and alumni have served in the armed forces and in international peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts. The ceremony provided an opportunity to reflect on their contributions, recognize their sacrifices, and reaffirm our collective commitment to service, understanding, and peace.

As a university committed to creating positive change locally, nationally, and globally, we honour those who came before us and recommit ourselves to building a more peaceful and compassionate future.

HUSKIE ATHLETICS

Huskie student-athletes continue to represent the university with excellence both on the field of play and in the classroom.

This month, Anton Amundrud was named the 2026 Canada West Player of the Year, one of the conference's highest individual honours. The recognition highlights his exceptional season and reflects the strength of the Saskatchewan Huskies football program. Huskie Athletics also celebrated six Canada West Soccer All-Stars and a Cross Country All-Rookie selection.

The achievements of our student-athletes continue to strengthen university pride and demonstrate the impact of commitment, teamwork, and excellence both within and beyond competition.

CLOSING REMARKS

This month has provided meaningful opportunities to celebrate achievement, recognize leadership, and reflect on service.

The accomplishments highlighted in this report reflect the collective efforts of individuals across our university community. Together, we will continue advancing our mission of learning, discovery, and engagement to strengthen Saskatchewan and contribute to a better future.