



President's Report to Senate

April 2024

The General Academic Assembly (GAA) address

USask faculty, staff, students and other members of the university community were invited to attend the General Academic Assembly (GAA) on April 4, when I delivered my ninth annual state-of-the-university address. This year's address was titled "*The best of times, the worst of times*" and was followed by a question period.

Members of the GAA include the president as chair, members of faculty, deans, executive directors of schools, vice-presidents, the university secretary and the registrar, as well as elected students. The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995, directs that the GAA meet annually to allow the president to present a report respecting the state of the university and any other matters that the president considers appropriate.

More information including the meeting agenda and printed copy of the address are available at governance.usask.ca.

USask statement on provincial budget

On March 20, the Government of Saskatchewan announced its 2024-25 budget, confirming its continued commitment to deliver on a multi-year funding agreement to support shared priorities and financial sustainability for USask.

The multi-year funding commitment, now in its fourth and final year, will continue to provide predictable, stable support enabling USask to continue to provide outstanding post-secondary education and ensure innovation to strengthen and move Saskatchewan forward.

While the university will do an in-depth review of the budget to determine full impacts to the university, USask's initial reaction to the budget is positive. USask and the Government of Saskatchewan share a long history of working together on shared priorities to benefit the people of Saskatchewan. The ongoing support of post-secondary education shows a commitment to teaching, learning and research that strengthens communities throughout the province.

USask was especially pleased to see a one-time inflationary increase of 2.2 percent, or about \$5.7 million, in the final year of the multi-year funding agreement. This one-time increase is recognition from the government of the inflationary pressures faced. This will provide some relief as we continue to deliver on our teaching, learning and research mission and contribute to a stronger Saskatchewan.

Another area further supported was in the human health resources, including funding for occupational therapy and speech language pathology. USask is excited to move forward with the province on further development of these programs. Saskatchewan-based programming in these areas will have many benefits, including giving students the opportunity for team-based care training with other learners in the health professions that will ultimately translate into better care. This will benefit the quality of life in Saskatchewan.

The university now hopes to work with government on developing a new multi-year funding agreement. The multi-year funding agreement demonstrated how much the government recognized the value USask provides to the province. USask graduates and researchers provide immense impact and move USask towards being the university Saskatchewan and the world needs.

The 2024-25 budget is available online at www.saskatchewan.ca/budget.

USask research makes a splash on World Water Day

On March 22, USask invited all of us to think about how we use water. World Water Day is one of the United Nations' (UN) annual observances intended to raise awareness about access to water and water security issues for people around the world.

Clean Water and Sanitation is also one of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – calls to action from the UN that acknowledge the need to address many facets of research and social strategies required by all countries to help address poverty, inequality, health-care issues, our environment and climate change.

Dr. Corinne Schuster-Wallace (PhD), the executive director of the Global Institute for Water Security (GIWS) and an associate professor in USask's Department of Geography and Planning in the College of Arts and Science, said recognizing World Water Day is critical for a forward-thinking research institute like the Global Institute for Water Security (GIWS) at USask.

The World Water Day event at USask brought together key speakers from the Prairies who play a vital role in how we use and manage our water resources. Representatives from universities, independent research institutions, government bodies, nonprofits and environmental groups attended the presentation and roundtable discussion in USask's Convocation Hall. Following presentations, there was a poster session highlighting the ongoing water research of USask students.

The event's keynote speaker was Dr. Melissa McCracken (PhD) from Tufts University, and six experts were involved in the panel discussion chaired by Schuster Wallace titled: "Challenges and opportunities related to drought and water co-operation in Saskatchewan."

Schuster-Wallace emphasized the importance of collaboration across multiple fronts, noting it will be a requirement to create the most effective strategies for the challenge ahead.

The theme for this year's World Water Day was "Water for Peace." Schuster-Wallace said the theme addresses issues of water collaboration for both Canada and other countries. The topic of water scarcity has been at the forefront throughout Western Canada this year, as talk of a drought has circulated widely due to a number of factors, including a limited snowpack in the Rockies and on the Prairies.

It's this kind of research that's taking place at GIWS, where world-class researchers are delving deeply into what's next for managing our water resources and what's happening on the cutting edge of water sciences. As Schuster-Wallace noted, the water community at USask is not only undertaking research but also training the next level of leaders in water and climate science – and the World Water Day event is another element of GIWS' ongoing goals.

UN International day for the elimination of racial discrimination

Every year on March 21, USask observes the United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

As we reflect on the progress that we have made as a campus community, and acknowledge the important work that still lies ahead, we reaffirm our commitment to being the most welcoming and supportive place that we can be for all students, staff, faculty, and alumni. We are creating the change that we want to see for our university, in our community, and throughout society.

As we continue to walk this journey together, our path forward is marked by USask's newly launched website that shares the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework](#) that has been endorsed by all three USask governing bodies. The EDI Framework defines our vision for a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive university that will be advanced through our strategies and goals. Turning our vision into a reality will require us to be concrete and intentional about what we need to do and how we need to do it.

Our ambition is to be a university for everyone, one where we all belong and can flourish. To realize this ambition, we will concentrate our efforts on advancing six strategic priorities. Each strategic priority will be advanced by goals that will guide our efforts to embed and reflect EDI across our university.

Student Experience: Enrich the student experience by increasing the diversity of our student body, appreciating this diversity, and creating environments that foster belonging for all students.

Teaching and Learning: Embed EDI concepts into our teaching and learning programming, services and activities and evolve our learning environments to be inclusive, accessible and supportive.

Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work: Enhance our research excellence by incorporating EDI concepts into research programs, activities and environments and encouraging those with diverse perspectives, worldviews and contributions.

Employee Experience: Evolve our working environment and workplace culture by incorporating EDI concepts into human resources and talent management processes, decisions and activities.

Systems: Be intentional and proactive in challenging the status quo and changing our structures, systems, policies, procedures, and processes to include EDI concepts.

Physical Space: Create inclusive, supportive, accessible and safe spaces where everyone has the opportunity to participate meaningfully and experience a sense of belonging.

We all have a personal responsibility to support, encourage, and ensure a more equitable campus culture, and we all have a role to play to confront racial discrimination at every opportunity to build a more just society. We must always be prepared to put words into action, reflected in our daily decisions and interactions with one another, as we live the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, and embrace *manāchitowin* to create and shape the university community that we want to be. Let us all re-commit to doing our part to confront racial discrimination at every opportunity, to be champions of equity, diversity and inclusion, and to build a better campus community and society that is safe and supportive for all.

USask moves up in international subject rankings

USask has placed among the best universities in the world in two newly released international subject rankings. After increasing its ranking in the [2023 THE](#) and [ShanghaiRanking university tier list](#) to the 351-400 tier and the 301-400 tier respectively, USask has also made strides in the ranking of key individual subjects.

USask ranked in all 11 of the possible subjects in the THE list, making significant moves up in multiple science and engineering subject areas. The university improved in five subject areas: Clinical and Health, Engineering, Life Sciences, Psychology, and Physical Sciences. USask made its greatest leaps in the areas of Clinical Health and Engineering, moving up to the 301-400 tier from the 501-600 tier in Clinical Health and up to the 201-250 tier from 301-400 in Engineering.

USask's highest rankings came in Education (151-175), Engineering (201-250), Physical Sciences (201-250), and Law (201-250). USask achieved a ranking of 17th in the world in Water Resources and placed in the 51-75 tier in Veterinary Sciences. Those rankings correlate to first and third, respectively, across participating Canadian institutions. The university also achieved a top 150 rank in the areas of Agricultural Sciences, Energy Science & Engineering, and Environmental Science & Engineering.

Overall, USask ranked in 23 out of 55 subject areas, an increase from 22 last year. USask performed well alongside other U15 universities, earning a top five rank among U15 schools in 12 different subject areas laid out in the Shanghai Rankings list. USask also appeared in the

rankings for the first time in Biomedical Engineering and Dentistry & Oral Sciences, tied for 4th and 6th in the U15, respectively.

VIDO signs agreement with Pirbright to advance vaccine manufacturing

USask's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Centre for Veterinary Vaccine Innovation and Manufacturing (CVIM) at The Pirbright Institute (Pirbright). The MOU allows for expanded collaborations and training around vaccine manufacturing to drive innovations for animal health.

The collaboration, signed in Pirbright, U.K., will contribute to global animal health, including process development and vaccine manufacturing for emerging infectious diseases of livestock, specifically those that affect primarily low-and-middle-income countries.

VIDO has close to five decades of expertise developing vaccines against emerging infectious diseases and is one of the largest and most advanced containment Level 3-agriculture (CL3-Ag) research facilities in the world. The new Vaccine Development Centre (VDC) at VIDO builds on VIDO's roots in veterinary medicine and expertise in developing animal models of disease. This is important as most new and emerging human infectious diseases originate in animals.

The CVIM based at Pirbright was established with funding from the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). It was established to help answer an unmet global need to develop vaccines to control disease in livestock. Both the VDC and CVIM have been established to accelerate commercial development, with a recognized effort to prioritize neglected livestock diseases and urgent emerging zoonotic diseases.

Two new Rhodes Scholars make USask history

Two students from USask were among only 11 from across the country to be awarded prestigious Rhodes Scholarships in 2023. This success marks the first time since 1991 that USask has celebrated two recipients selected in the same year.

Biological sciences student Rachel Andres and nursing student Taron Topham were named Rhodes Scholars, joining a legacy of USask students awarded the honour since 1907. It is the second straight year that USask students have been named Rhodes Scholars, joining Cassidy Serhienko, who was one of 11 recipients in Canada in 2022. They will head to the University of Oxford in fall of 2024 for fully funded post-graduate studies, joining more than a 100 new Rhodes Scholars from around the world. Since USask's establishment in 1907, this year's two recipients bring USask's total number of Rhodes Scholars in university history up to 75.

Andres, who grew up in rural Saskatchewan, hopes to continue her biological science studies at Oxford. She is currently in her final year of studies for her Bachelor of Science (honours) degree in biology. She also completed a Bachelor of Education at USask in 2023, and has worked as a

teaching assistant in both the English and biology departments. A member of the university's choral group, the Greystone Singers, Andres has also studied abroad in Costa Rica.

Topham plans to complete a Master of Science in translational health sciences and in international health and tropical medicine at Oxford. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (with great distinction) as a Loran Scholar at USask, and is currently working as a registered nurse in Saskatoon. Topham previously served as a volunteer firefighter and completed work placements with the Saskatoon Foodbank, Prairie Harm Reduction Services, Grandview Medical Clinic and the Offord Centre for Child Studies.

The **Rhodes Scholarship** includes tuition, fees, and a stipend for living expenses while studying at the University of Oxford. Established in 1903, it is the oldest graduate scholarship offered in the world and one of the most prestigious.

GIFS at USask partnership receives \$56 million commitment for Bangladesh Agtech Centre

A research and training initiative launched by the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) at USask and the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) of the Ministry of Agriculture in Bangladesh has received a \$56.2 million commitment from the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The funding, to be invested over five years, will support the establishment of the Bangabandhu-Pierre Elliott Trudeau Agriculture Technology Centre (BP-ATC) as a centre of excellence at the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute in Gazipur, Bangladesh.

The commitment to the BP-ATC will support the development of research infrastructure and help GIFS, BARC, and other partners to purchase equipment, train more than 30 graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, and lead research enhancing wheat, rice, lentils, canola, and other crops.

Approximately \$9.8 million will support research and training occurring within Saskatchewan through activities at GIFS and other partners, including the Global Institute for Water Security, USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources, the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre, the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, and the National Research Council of Canada.

GIFS' partnership with BARC was established in 2020 to promote sustainable food security. Bangladesh has experienced food security and production challenges resulting from rapid population growth, loss of agricultural land to urbanization, post-harvest losses and climate-induced stresses, including drought, heat, and soil salinity. Research and innovation have driven Canada's and Saskatchewan's agriculture success and GIFS' partnership with BARC is designed to use these assets to deliver joint programs that enhance farmer incomes, address the effects of climate change, and provide valuable research information for Saskatchewan and Canadian agriculture.

Through the BP-ATC, partners in Saskatchewan and Canada will contribute to programs pursuing the following research objectives within Bangladesh:

- Enhance crop breeding and plant improvement using genomics and phenomics;
- Advance soil health and quality;
- Improve soil water regime and adaptation;
- Deliver innovations for post-harvest food handling and processing; and
- Increase data management and analytics in agricultural research.

Since the establishment of the GIFS-BARC partnership, GIFS has opened its regional office in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and established two research chairs in food security — one at USask, held by Dr. Andrew Sharpe of GIFS, and a second in Bangladesh — who are already working with graduate students and post-doctoral fellows researching plant genomics and postharvest traits.

The BP-ATC's name recognizes the longstanding ties between Canada and Bangladesh. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the first Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and Canada — led by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau at the time — was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh's independence in 1971.

The GIFS-BARC partnership also builds on the history of collaboration and trade between Saskatchewan and Bangladesh, which is one of the province's Top 10 trading partners.

For more information on the GIFS-BARC partnership and the BP-ATC, see gifs.ca/Bangladesh.

VIDO awarded U.S. contract for its Vaccine Development Centre

USask Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) in Canada has been awarded an Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract, 75N93023D00013, by the United States' National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). VIDO is one of only seven organizations selected as a member in the NIAID service provider pool. It is also the only non-U.S. organization and the only university-based organization selected. VIDO can participate in providing NIAID's Preclinical Services for Biopharmaceutical Produce Development in two main areas: Process Development and Related Activities and cGMP Manufacture and Related Activities. The seven-year IDIQ contract is valued up to US\$30 million.

VIDO's Vaccine Development Centre will play an important role in providing services that will help a wide variety of researchers obtain the critical data needed to advance products, partnerships, and complete studies needed to enter clinical trials.

The completion of VIDO's Vaccine Development Centre was the first step in establishing the organization as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research. Other key aspects of the development include an expanded scientific team, establishing containment Level 4 capacity, and building a new animal facility that can house a variety of species.

Funding for the Vaccine Development Centre was provided by the Government of Canada, Government of Saskatchewan, founding corporate partners, and private donors through the *Friends of VIDO* campaign.

USask strengthens research partnerships with University of Bonn

A delegation from USask travelled to the University of Bonn (UBonn) in Germany as part of an ongoing commitment to develop joint research projects between the institutions. Members of USask's senior leadership team took part in a "research summit" during a recent trip to Frankfurt, Bonn and Berlin, with the goal of fostering and reaffirming USask's commitment to Germany in both research and education.

The summit also emphasized the connection between USask, UBonn and the Government of Saskatchewan's international ties to Germany, while also identifying shared areas of research expertise on which to collaborate.

As part of the summit, members of the USask delegation participated in targeted research roundtables with counterparts from the UBonn to delve further into possible research partnerships and strategies for the future. The theme of the research summit and the roundtables that took place was titled "Planetary health: facing future challenges" – a theme which aligns strongly with USask's research priorities.

USask climbs worldwide sustainability rankings

USask has risen in the QS World University Rankings: Sustainability, cementing its position as a top-100 institution globally taking on the world's greatest environmental, social and governance issues.

In the second-ever QS world sustainability rankings, USask has risen to 89th in the world from a rank of 91 in the inaugural rankings in 2022. USask also maintained its position in the top 100 in the rankings, despite the pool of participating institutions more than doubling from 700 to 1,403 in 2023.

The QS sustainability rankings are intended to highlight the action being taken by institutions around the globe which "demonstrate a commitment to a more sustainable existence," per the QS website. Those actions include factors like how universities are addressing climate change and conducting research in support of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The sustainability rankings are determined by an institution's performance in various indicators parsed into three categories: Environmental Impact, Social Impact, and Governance. The indicators in each category include research, educational and policy factors that determine each institution's overall rank.

The highest-performing category for USask was Environmental Impact, where USask was ranked in the top 50 globally.

USask's position of 89th overall also places it 24th out of 342 participating institutions in the Americas, and 12th of 31 participating Canadian universities. This is not USask's only marked

success in the QS rankings this year – the university also jumped more than 100 spots to a best-ever ranking of 345th in the QS World University Rankings released in the summer.

Dr. Angela Jaime appointed vice-provost, Indigenous engagement

I wish to congratulate Dr. Angela Jaime, who was appointed the vice-provost, Indigenous engagement. Dr. Jaime, who is an enrolled member of the Pit River Tribe of northern California, reports to the provost and vice-president academic. The vice-provost, Indigenous engagement works with Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders on and off campus to support USask's academic mission, intersecting with areas such as governance, teaching, learning, and student experience, and research. The appointment was approved by the USask Board of Governors on Dec. 12.

The vice-provost, Indigenous engagement also provides guidance and leadership to students, faculty, administrators, and staff as the campus community engages in Indigenization and reconciliation initiatives as identified through the university's [Mission, Vision, and Values](#), the [University Plan 2025](#), and [ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan](#) "Let's Fly Up Together"—the first Indigenous Strategy solely created by Indigenous people at a Canadian U15 research institution.

International Women's Day at USask: Reflecting on history, building the future

The USask community recognizes and celebrates the many contributions of women to our vibrant campus community. In celebration of International Women's Day, [USask published an article featuring just a few of the many women throughout USask's storied history who have led the way in making a difference with their research, academic, community service and athletic accomplishments.](#)

With many more examples to be found in the university's history, the contributions of women to the University of Saskatchewan are vast and deeply connected to the campus community.

The university is committed to creating a safe and supportive space for all who work, learn, and study in its community, and believes equity, diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging strengthen the community and enhance excellence, innovation, and creativity in all domains. Read more about USask's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy [here](#).

Celebrating USask students and community during Indigenous Achievement Week

Indigenous Achievement Week (IAW) at USask brought together community and celebrated Indigenous students' achievements, academic excellence, resiliency, and leadership.

Soup and Bannock, beading, and film nights - all activities that took place during IAW from March 5-8. Events were hosted throughout the week by USask units and colleges, and all were welcome to attend. One of the highlights of the week was **the Indigenous Student Achievement Awards Ceremony**. The awards took place Wednesday on March 6 at Marquis Hall, celebrating Indigenous student success. Students were honoured for their academic achievement, community engagement, leadership, research and resiliency. Please follow the link to find a listing of the **2024 award winners**

National USask-led satellite science mission receives \$17 million in funding

USask researchers have received \$17 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) fund in support of the HAWC (High-altitude Aerosols, Water vapour and Clouds) mission. This will place USask at the forefront of space innovation and has the potential to revolutionize the way we understand and address climate change.

HAWC is the Canadian contribution to an international, NASA-led four-satellite Atmosphere Observing System (AOS) mission. The climate satellite instruments supported by USask researchers for the AOS mission will provide new data for scientists to better analyze, interpret and understand factors contributing to climate change.

The HAWC team is a Canada-wide group of researchers from 14 universities and numerous industry partners working in collaboration with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) with funding from the Government of Canada, as well as Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the National Research Council of Canada.

Supported by the CSA, part of the HAWC mission consists of three cutting-edge climate science satellite instruments designed and developed by Canadian universities: the Aerosol Limb Imager (ALI), Spatial Heterodyne Observations of Water (SHOW), and TICFIRE (Thin Ice Cloud in Far Infrared Emissions).

Dr. Adam Bourassa (PhD), a professor in the Department of Physics and Engineering Physics in USask's College of Arts and Science and part of USask's Institute of Space and Atmospheric Studies (ISAS), is the principal investigator leading work on the ALI instrument. USask researcher Dr. Doug Degenstein (PhD) in the Department of Physics and Engineering Physics in USask's College of Arts and Science acts as the principal investigator for the SHOW instrument. Dr. Jean-Pierre Blanchet (PhD) with the Université du Québec à Montréal is the principal investigator of the TICFIRE instrument.

Government of Saskatchewan commits \$15 million to Global Institute for Food Security at USask

On March 11, Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture David Marit announced a funding commitment of \$15 million over five years to the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) at USask.

Founded in 2012 as part of the University of Saskatchewan's world-class agri-science hub, GIFS works with its partners to provide expertise and leadership in the discovery, development and delivery of innovative solutions to produce globally sustainable food. The funding for GIFS will provide \$3 million each year from 2023-2027 to support its ongoing operations, contributing to Saskatchewan's agriculture sector through work such as supporting crop breeding through sequencing, bioinformatics and data analytics services or technology development that facilitates commercialization of new products.

In January, GIFS released the results of a two-year study providing evidence that Saskatchewan's production of five major field crops has a significantly smaller carbon footprint in comparison to regions that export the same products, including Australia, France, Germany, Italy and the United States. The conclusions of the study have become a fundamental aspect of Saskatchewan's sustainability story and the sector's increasingly important role in global food production.

USask mourns the passing of Dr. Leslie Dubé

USask is remembering the legacy of Saskatoon philanthropist Dr. Leslie (Les) Dubé (LLD'07), who passed away on March 13, 2024, at the age of 91. The Saskatoon philanthropist, who died on March 13, 2024, at the age of 91, was bestowed with an honorary degree in 2007 for his many contributions to USask and to organizations across the province.

Les and Irene Dubé were born and raised in Wynyard, Sask., and married in 1954. Just six years later, they made their first private-sector investment by purchasing land on Eighth Street East in Saskatoon, and, by 1969, they opened a small business office to manage their growing venture.

The Dubés have attributed the continued success of their Concorde Group of Companies to hard work, sound business practices, and a social consciousness. In 1993, they decided to donate money accumulated from their business interests to charities, and, since then, their philanthropic efforts have focused on health, education, religion, and poverty locally and internationally.

The Dubés have supported more than 100 different charities in the province, including a \$10-million donation to support the University of Saskatchewan Health Sciences project. In their honour, a state-of-the-art library and a large lecture theatre in the Health Sciences Building were named the Leslie and Irene Dubé Health Sciences Library and the Leslie and Irene Dubé Theatre.

In 2006, Les and Irene Dubé were inducted into the SABEX Hall of Fame and were recognized during the City of Saskatoon Centennial as part of the 100 Who Made a Difference. In 2007, at USask's spring Convocation, they received their honorary Doctor of Laws degrees from the University of

Saskatchewan—the highest honour that USask can bestow. In 2008, they received the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, the province's highest honour, and in 2017, in recognition of their philanthropic contributions, they were named **Members of the Order of Canada.**