

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO SENATE

April 2026

OPENING REMARKS

On January 1, 2026, I began my term as the 12th president and vice-chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan (USask). It is an honour to serve this institution and province at a time of significant momentum and opportunity.

Over the past several months, I have had the privilege of meeting with community leaders, alumni, partners, and supporters from across Saskatchewan and beyond. I am deeply grateful for the warmth, insight, and encouragement extended to me as president. These conversations have reinforced the confidence people feel in USask and the essential role the institution plays in the life of this province.

USask continues to be a place where world-class research, innovative teaching, and meaningful partnership come together to create impact locally, nationally, and globally. We are navigating a period of rapid change, marked by shifting economic conditions, evolving workforce needs, and global challenges that demand bold ideas and strong collaboration. In this context, USask's contributions to Saskatchewan's prosperity, health-care capacity, food and energy security, and cultural vitality have never been more important.

I am energized by the momentum across the university and the strength of the partnerships that continue to shape USask's role in Saskatchewan and beyond. The achievements highlighted in this report reflect a university that is rising to meet the needs of the province and contributing to Canada's leadership on the world stage.

I look forward to continuing the conversations that have begun over these first months, including at a welcome event planned for May 8, 2026, that will provide another opportunity to connect with members of our campus community.

UPLAN 2035

In March, USask formally launched the development of University Plan 2035 (UPlan 2035), a major institutional initiative that will define the university's identity and direction for the next decade. UPlan 2035 is grounded in USask's sense of place on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis and is being shaped through broad engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni, Indigenous Nations, government, industry, and community partners.

Our process will follow three stages:

- In the generation phase, we are seeking to identify broad themes around our strengths and values.
- In the defining phase, we will begin to identify priorities that are measurable, future-oriented, and focused on the areas where USask can have the greatest impact.
- In the validate phase, we will return to key groups across campus and beyond to test and refine the priorities.

The plan will sharpen the focus of USask's long-term priorities, strengthen alignment across the institution, and ensure people of all identities and backgrounds see themselves reflected in the university's future.

LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

Vice-President University Relations Cheryl Hamelin will retire on April 30, 2026, after four years of exceptional service to her alma mater. During her tenure, Cheryl strengthened fundraising, communications, alumni engagement, strategic events, advancement operations, and Huskie Athletics. Under her leadership, the *Be What the World Needs* campaign became the largest fundraising campaign in Saskatchewan's history, raising more than \$572 million and advancing student success, critical research, Indigenous achievement, and visionary spaces across campus. Her ability to inspire donors, volunteers, and colleagues has left a lasting legacy. Kim Kroll-Goodwin will serve as Interim Vice-President University Relations beginning May 1, providing steady leadership during this transition. I'd like to thank Cheryl for her leadership and her deep commitment to USask.

Dr. Angela Jaime will take on a new role as Vice-President Indigenous at the University of Victoria and will remain with USask until mid-June. Angela's leadership has shaped USask in meaningful and enduring ways through initiatives such as the ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan Indigenous Strategy, the deybwewin | taapwaywin | tapwewin Indigenous Truth Policy on Indigenous membership/citizenship, the Indigenous Summer Institute, and the Smudging and Ceremonies Policy. She has also built, mentored, and empowered a strong team within

the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement, and they will continue this important work throughout the transition. Dr. Amaranta Sokol will assume the role of Acting Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement beginning May 1. I'd like to thank Angela for her vision, her leadership, and her lasting contributions to this university.

CAMPUS PLANNING AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

USask continues to advance work through its [Office of Campus Planning](#), which guides the long-term evolution of the physical campus in alignment with the university's mission, vision, and strategic priorities. The office leads planning related to sector plans, space planning, mobility, and sustainability, ensuring that future development supports the university's academic and research goals. This planning work aligns closely with the development of UPlan 2035, ensuring that the physical campus evolves in step with the university's long-term academic and institutional priorities

The historic Stone Barn remains under active evaluation. The Board of Governors approved \$500,000 to stabilize the structure and preserve future options. This work was completed in December 2025, and the update is available on the Stone Barn [website](#). Discussions at the Board continue regarding the future of the Stone Barn and public consultations have been helpful.

PROVINCIAL PARTNERSHIP AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The Government of Saskatchewan's [2026 budget](#) reaffirmed strong support for post-secondary education, including stable multi-year operating funding and targeted investments in health-care training, infrastructure renewal, and research capacity. This follows the multi-year funding agreement announced in late 2025, which provided predictable annual increases, an uncommon level of stability in the Canadian post-secondary sector.

These investments strengthen USask's ability to meet provincial needs in medicine, nursing, agriculture, engineering, and innovation, and reinforce the university's role in developing the workforce that drives Saskatchewan's growth.

RESEARCH AND GLOBAL IMPACT

USask continues to advance research that strengthens Saskatchewan's economy, improves health outcomes, and contributes to global scientific progress.

Major research investments

Significant new investments are expanding USask's research capacity:

- USask received two Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) awards in the most recent funding round:
 - A \$6.2-million investment supporting a new poultry laying research facility, enabling advanced work in animal welfare, nutrition, and sustainable food production.
 - A \$3-million investment for project "The Story Collider: Listening, Telling and Retelling." This project was funded through the inaugural Social Science, Humanities and Art (SSHA) funding stream.
- The Harrington Plant Growth Facility and Soil Science Field Facility, funded in 2025, moved into active development in 2026 and will expand capacity for crop development, soil health research, and climate-resilient agriculture.
- VIDO renewed its partnership with the International Vaccine Institute in South Korea, reinforcing Saskatchewan's role in global infectious disease research and vaccine development.

International research partnerships

USask secured a \$2-million, five-year international research collaboration with the São Paulo Research Foundation in Brazil, focused on oral, dental, and craniofacial research. This highly competitive partnership reflects global recognition of USask's research leadership.

Health and biomedical discoveries

USask researchers continue to advance major health breakthroughs, including:

- Publication of the first Canadian clinical guidelines for Spinal Bulbar Muscular Atrophy (SBMA), filling a critical gap in neuromuscular care.
- New progress on tuberculosis vaccine development at VIDO, contributing to global efforts to combat one of the world's deadliest infectious diseases.
- A national multi-site study advancing rehabilitation approaches for people living with multiple sclerosis.

INNOVATION

Quantum computing

On March 31, 2026, USask announced it will soon be home to Canada's first university owned-and-operated, vendor-supported, full-stack, open-architecture quantum computer. This national first positions USask as a leader in quantum innovation and opens new frontiers in computing, materials science, health research, and advanced modelling.

Global engagement: India

In February and March 2026, a USask delegation led by Vice-President Research Baljit Singh travelled to India to advance strategic research partnerships. The visit coincided with a broader Canadian delegation that included Prime Minister Mark Carney and Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe, who met with Indian government and industry leaders to advance collaboration in trade, education, and innovation.

As part of this mission, the Governments of India and Canada committed to a partnership to advance bilateral co-operation in agriculture and nutritional security. This partnership includes the establishment of an India–Canada Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence. The Government of India nominated the National Institute of Food Technology–Entrepreneurship and Management, Kundli, and the Government of Canada nominated the University of Saskatchewan to co-chair a joint task force to advance this initiative and partnership.

RANKINGS AND GLOBAL REPUTATION

USask continues to be recognized internationally for excellence in research, teaching, and global impact. Recent subject-area rankings placed the university among the world's leading institutions in several fields that are central to Saskatchewan's economic and social well-being. USask earned strong placements in agriculture, veterinary medicine, environmental sciences, and water research, reflecting the university's long-standing leadership in areas that address some of the world's most pressing challenges.

These rankings highlight the strength of USask's research enterprise, the quality of its academic programs, and the contributions of faculty, staff, and students whose work is shaping innovation and discovery in Canada and around the world.

INDIGENOUS ACHIEVEMENT, LANGUAGES, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Indigenous language revitalization

Beginning in fall 2026, USask will offer a new Michif Indigenous Language Certificate, developed in partnership with Métis Nation–Saskatchewan, the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and Saskatoon Public Schools. The program expands the existing Certificate in Indigenous Languages and supports the revitalization of Heritage and Southern Michif through Indigenous teaching methodologies.

Indigenous Achievement Awards

During Indigenous Achievement Week in March 2026, 51 Indigenous students were honoured for academic excellence, leadership, research, community engagement, and resiliency. These awards highlight the strength and impact of Indigenous students across disciplines. Our Wise Ones, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers were honoured at the event as well.

ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan update

On April 17, 2026, the university hosted the 2026 ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan Spring Symposium, which focused on Phase 4 of the strategy: reporting. The symposium brought together faculty, staff, and students to reflect on nearly five years of activity, share unit-level stories grounded in the seven commitments, and examine how actions across colleges, schools, and portfolios are contributing to systems change. This work supports preparation for the five-year milestone of ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan on August 20, 2026, and reinforces the strategy's role as an Indigenous-led pathway that continues to shape institutional reflection, accountability, and transformation.

Black History Month

In February, USask marked Black History Month with events, learning opportunities, and community conversations celebrating Black excellence and exploring the historical and contemporary experiences of Black communities in Canada. Programming highlighted Black leadership in academia, the arts, health, and community advocacy.

Asian Heritage Month

Looking ahead into May, USask will mark Asian Heritage Month with learning opportunities and stories that celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of people of Asian heritage. Programming will highlight diverse perspectives across our campus and encourage reflection on the many ways Asian communities shape our province, country, and world. A Spotlight page on the main USask webpage will share event details, community stories, and curated learning resources.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

National and international honours

USask faculty, staff, and students continue to be recognized nationally and internationally for excellence:

- Dr. Curtis Pozniak (PhD), director of the Crop Development Centre, received the Bertebos (pron: BEHR-teh-boss) Prize, a biennial international award recognizing some of the world's most significant contributions to sustainable agriculture at the intersection of ecology and food production.
- Dr. Arinjay Banerjee (PhD), VIDO scientist, was named an Emerging Leader in Health Sciences by the Canadian Society for Health Sciences.
- Dr. Ingrid Pickering (PhD), chief science officer of the Canadian Light Source, received the YWCA Women of Distinction STEM Award.
- Two USask researchers, Dr. Clinton Westman (PhD) and Dr. Matthew Neufeld (PhD), received Fulbright Canada research placements, among the most prestigious academic exchange awards in North America.

National athletic achievements

- The Huskie women's basketball team captured the 2026 U SPORTS national championship, their second consecutive national title.
 - Ella Murphy Wiebe was named U SPORTS Tournament MVP.
 - Gage Grassick earned U SPORTS First Team All-Canadian honours.
- Conner Roulette received the Clare Drake Award as the national Rookie of the Year in men's hockey.

COMMUNITY IMPACT AND CELEBRATION

Drama department: 80th anniversary

In March 2026, USask's Drama Program, the first university drama department in the Commonwealth, celebrated its 80th anniversary. Events included an anniversary social and dinner at Marquis Hall and a showcase of five newly commissioned one-act plays by USask alumni at the Emrys Jones Theatre. This milestone highlights the department's national legacy in theatre education and its enduring impact on Canadian arts and culture.

CLOSING REMARKS

As the university looks ahead, the central focus is the development of UPlan 2035. This work is now underway and shaped through broad engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni, Indigenous Peoples, government, industry, and community partners. In the months ahead, this process will define a clear and aligned direction for the next decade and ensure people of all identities and backgrounds see themselves reflected in USask's future.

The momentum highlighted throughout this report provides a strong foundation for this planning work. Recent achievements in research, provincial partnership, global collaboration, and student and faculty success continue to demonstrate the impact USask makes in Saskatchewan and beyond.

As UPlan 2035 takes shape, the insights gathered will guide decisions and investments that position the institution to meet the evolving needs of the province while contributing to progress globally. USask enters this next chapter with purpose, momentum, and a deep commitment to serving Saskatchewan and the world.