

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO SENATE

October 2025

CAMPAIGN FOR USASK

The University of Saskatchewan Be What the World Needs comprehensive campaign came to an end in June with the announcement that USask surpassed its initial fundraising goal of \$500 million, reaching a total of \$570,739,155. From individual donations to large corporate gifts from organizations such as [Nutrien](#) and [Cameco](#), the campaign saw thousands of USask community members, alumni and supporters from around the globe come together to advance four major areas: critical research, Indigenous achievement, student success, and the creation of visionary spaces for innovative research, teaching and learning.

In total, more than 100,000 gifts were made to the decade-long campaign from more than 27,000 companies, foundations, and individuals. There were more than 30,000 gifts to enhance the student experience through scholarships, bursaries, and mental and physical health supports. Significantly, 23 new research chairs have been funded in vitally important areas, including critical minerals, neurological surgery, Indigenous health, multiple sclerosis, and sustainable and digital agriculture. Over \$90 million is invested in new and enhanced learning environments, state-of-the-art athletic facilities, such as a renovated football clubhouse supported by USask's largest donors, Ron and Jane Graham, and new spaces to enhance student collaboration. Complementing major multi-million-dollar gifts from corporate donors and USask's most generous alumni supporters were smaller individual contributions from tens of thousands of graduates of the university, with one out of every nine alumni donating to the campaign.

On June 18, close to 1,000 supporters gathered in Merlis Belsher for a campaign wind-up celebration as the university officially announced it had surpassed its half-a-billion-dollar fundraising target by more than \$70 million. You can learn more about the results of the campaign at give.usask.ca.

Although the campaign period has concluded, generosity amongst the USask community and public is greater than ever, with additional transformational gifts recently announced, including a [\\$5 million gift from the Mastercard Foundation](#) that will further enhance the important work underway at USask to uplift the Indigenous experience. USask was one of 30 organizations across Canada to receive this strategic investment from the Mastercard Foundation in recognition of the outstanding impact for advancing education for Indigenous youth. The announcement marks the 10th anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Thank you for your extraordinary support of the campaign and your continued support of the University of Saskatchewan.

GIVING DAY 2025

USask's Giving Day took place on September 10 and marked a day of generosity and support for the university community. Thanks to the generosity of alumni, donors, faculty, staff, students and friends, this year's one-day giving initiative raised \$284,821 from 570 donors in support of 95 initiatives across the university.

SCOTT BANDA APPOINTED 17TH CHANCELLOR

Scott Banda has been appointed as USask's 17th chancellor. In the role, Scott will preside at university convocation ceremonies, confer degrees, chair University Senate and serve on the USask Board of Governors. The appointment was confirmed by the USask Senate on April 26th, 2025. Scott holds two degrees from USask, from the College of Arts and Science and the College of Law.

He built a 32-year career as an innovative leader of major organizations and corporations and has been a lifelong supporter of USask. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, he began his 20-year tenure with Federated Co-Operatives Limited (FCL) in 2002, leading legal affairs before being promoted to vice-president and then serving 12 years as FCL's chief executive officer until retiring in May of 2022. Banda was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal for Industry and Commerce in 2023, as well as the Cooperative Merit Award for Lifetime Co-operative Achievement. Scott is currently serving as chair of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Football League and formerly served as the chair of the Huskies Board of Trustees, two roles that combine his passion for sports and community with his extensive executive experience, legal counsel, and service in a variety of community and corporate board positions. Scott and his family have long been proud supporters of the

university, and the qualities that he brings both personally and professionally to this position will serve the university well. I am pleased to welcome him to his first Senate meeting as chair today.

USASK AND MUSKEG LAKE CREE NATION MOU

The University of Saskatchewan and Muskeg Lake Cree Nation came together in May to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The partnership is designed to advance shared priorities, including post-secondary education, research, health and wellness, as well as youth mentorship, community engagement and economic development. Following the signing of the MOU, a working group will be established with members from the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation community and key staff from various colleges at USask. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement, will care for the MOU and manage the working group, ensuring a plan is built specifically to meet the needs of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation.

8TH ANNUAL MĀMOWI ĀSOHTĒTĀN INTERNAL TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION FORUM

Sponsored by the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement and facilitated by the **Mistatimōk Committee**, this annual event is a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and provides an opportunity to gather and to constructively and respectfully dialogue and plan for the university environment we need and want. The 8th annual *māmowi āsohtētān* ("Let's Cross this Together") Internal Truth and Reconciliation Forum was held on September 26, 2025. This year's forum aligned with the International Decade of Indigenous Languages, focusing on the role USask plays in the revitalization of Indigenous languages in Saskatchewan and Canada. The event also marked the 10-year anniversary of USask hosting a first-of-its-kind national forum: *Building Reconciliation: Universities Answering the TRC's Calls to Action*.

SASKATCHEWAN BUILDS FUTURE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT WORKFORCE

USask is taking another step forward in strengthening its health-care workforce with the launch of a new training program for Physician Assistants (PAs). Twenty new students have joined the USask College of Medicine as the first cohort of the new Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) program. This milestone is a bold step in Saskatchewan's plan to train and recruit PAs right here at home. PAs are health professionals who have taken

advanced training to practise medicine under the supervision of a licensed physician, often within a multidisciplinary health team. The Government of Saskatchewan has invested over \$7 million to develop the two-year MPAS program. Admissions to USask's MPAS program were competitive, with 340 applicants for 20 available seats. Fifteen students are from Saskatchewan, representing 75 per cent of the class.

USASK LAUNCHES TWO FIRST-IN-SASKATCHEWAN REHABILITATION SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Two new programs have been launched in the School of Rehabilitation Science in the USask College of Medicine. Learners can now apply to be part of the province's first occupational therapy and speech-language pathology training programs. The School of Rehabilitation Science will be the first in Canada to have occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and physical therapy programs housed together with harmonized programs. The Government of Saskatchewan committed approximately \$17.8 million to develop the Master of Occupational Therapy and the Master of Speech-Language Pathology programs.

PROVINCES RENEW COMMITMENT TO VETERINARY TRAINING IN WESTERN CANADA

On May 22, the Governments of Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba renewed their financial commitment to the University of Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN), continuing a six-decade interprovincial agreement. The renewed agreement provides more than \$194 million to the WCVN over the next five years, helping ensure the college can deliver critical veterinary medicine programming, research, and clinical services that address the needs of each province.

CELEBRATING THE USASK COMMUNITY

SPRING CONVOCATION

USask Spring Convocation ceremonies took place from June 2-6, 2025, at Merlis Belsher Place. We welcomed 3,998 students to our alumni family, a group of distinguished graduates that number over 175,000 around the world. Spring Convocation is made possible by the dedicated faculty and staff who help prepare our graduates to make a meaningful difference in the world.

HOMEcoming 2025

Over 9,000 Huskie fans joined in the Homecoming festivities on Sept. 5 at Griffiths Stadium in Nutrien Park, where the Huskie football team took the win against the UBC Thunderbirds with a final score of 51-14. Food, live music, and a variety of campus and community vendors congregated in Co-op Family Rally Alley prior to the game. The 2024-25 national champion Huskie women's basketball team was also honoured during the Homecoming game. The fan-favourite Toga Run took place at halftime, a tradition dating back to the early 1960s. A variety of campus tours and reunion activities were also held.

Thank you to everyone who comes out each year to celebrate Homecoming, cheer on our student-athletes, and reconnect with classmates and colleagues. It is a lively, vibrant time to visit campus each fall and a tradition that will continue for many years to come.

SASKATCHEWAN ORDER OF MERIT RECIPIENTS

Six members of the USask community were recently invested into the Saskatchewan Order of Merit. The Saskatchewan Order of Merit was established in 1985 to celebrate excellence and achievements by Saskatchewan citizens. It is the province's highest honour that recognizes individuals for significant contributions in areas such as agriculture, business, industry, community leadership, public service, art, research, and volunteering. We are grateful to each of the recipients for their contributions to the province and to the University of Saskatchewan. The members of the USask community who will receive the honour include: alumni Brent Cotter (BComm'71), Robert Stromberg (JD'68), and Senapan Thunder (BEd'92); honorary degree recipient Dr. Ellen Remai (LLD'23); Professor Emeritus Dr. Ernie Barber (PhD); and cardiology professor Dr. Haissam Haddad (MD). The 2025 recipients were invested with the medal of the Order at a special ceremony marking the 40th anniversary of the Order in early June in Saskatoon.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

Four University of Saskatchewan researchers have been recognized with one of Canada's highest academic honours for invaluable contributions in their fields. The Royal Society of Canada (RSC) is considered the most prestigious collection of Canadian scholars, artists and researchers across a vast interdisciplinary field. The RSC fosters intellectual leadership for Canada and for the world. Dr. Dwight Newman (DPhil) and Dr. Leon Kochian (PhD) have been named RSC Fellows, and Dr. Steven Rayan (PhD) and Dr. Allyson Stevenson (PhD) have both been named College Members of the RSC. I want to extend my congratulations to each of the four researchers honoured this year. The RSC will be celebrating new fellows, college members and award recipients at the 2025 Celebration of Excellence and Engagement on Nov. 15.

Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella Prize

Each year, the RSC also awards the Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella Prize to a graduating student from each of the 24 law schools in Canada. The Abella Prize is presented annually to the student who, upon graduation, is most likely to positively influence equity and social justice in Canada. **Fatima Ahmed** from the USask College of Law was honoured with the 2025 prize. She has completed degrees in law, peace studies, education, disaster management, educational leadership, project management, and computer science. Fatima came to law school as a mature student after careers in community development and teaching. During law school, she completed the CLASSIC clinical law intensive and Osgoode's Intensive Program in Indigenous Lands, Resources and Governments, completed an academic exchange in Finland, and mooted in the Bowman Tax Moot competition. Fatima was recently awarded the American Society of International Law Helton Fellowship, for which she intends to undertake field research on the ongoing genocide of Rohingya Muslims. Congratulations to Fatima on this well-deserved honour.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION AND WEEK OF REFLECTION

September 30 marked the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day—a day that opened the door to global conversation on all aspects of Residential Schools. Leading up to September 30, from September 22–26, the USask community participated in a week of reflection on Truth and Reconciliation. Members of the university community were encouraged to use this opportunity to create meaningful discussion about the effects of Residential Schools and the legacy they have left behind.

Numerous community events also took place around Saskatoon and throughout the province to mark the Week of Reflection and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day. Orange banners posted around the Bowl reflect the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action related to the post-secondary education sector. This year, 12 orange blankets were also installed across campus, reminding us of our commitment to this critical work.

Each year, the USask Indigenous Space and Visual Symbols in the Health Sciences Committee partners with Shop USask to offer orange shirts in recognition of Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Sept. 30. This year's shirt features original artwork by Chris Chipak, a talented artist from Red Pheasant Cree Nation. Shirts are available all year long. An Indigenous student-focused event was held on Sept. 25, featuring Chris presenting on his inspiration behind his creative process and this year's orange shirt design. To date, orange shirt proceeds totalling over \$49,000 have been directed toward a fund supporting the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, with a portion of proceeds also being directed toward the artist.

The university remained closed on September 30 to allow everyone to take part in the activities that were most meaningful to them. Resources and information were made available online through the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement website, and remain available year-round. Resources and learning materials can also be accessed through the University Library at any time. Thank you to everyone in our campus community who planned an event, took part in learning or took a moment to reflect on this critical week.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

May was Asian Heritage Month in Canada, honouring the legacy and contributions of members of Asian communities spanning East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Western Asia, and Central Asia. This year's USask theme was "Reclaiming Asian Excellence," and the month of activities began with a panel discussion featuring students, faculty, and alumni who shared their stories and lived experiences.

This was the second annual Asian Heritage Month launch at USask, and we are grateful for the participation and engagement from USask students, faculty and staff who have made this initiative an annual event on campus. The event highlighted the importance of addressing historical and systemic inequities faced by Asian communities. A full list of activities, learning resources, and events was made available at spotlight.usask.ca.

INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH AND NATIONAL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY

June was National Indigenous History Month, with June 21 marking National Indigenous Peoples' Day. Members of the university community were encouraged to take time to learn more about the diversity of Indigenous communities, cultures, and languages, as well as the heritage and history of Treaty 6 Territory and the homeland of the Métis. It was a time for reflection and reaffirmation of our shared responsibility—as individuals and as an institution—to uplift Indigenousization and advance transformative decolonization leading to reconciliation.

Many community events took place around Saskatoon and throughout the province, and were open to all. Resources and information were available online through the [USask Spotlight website](#), the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement website, the University Library's Indigenous Studies Portal, and the [National Indigenous History Month Research Guide](#), and continue to be available year-round.

PRIDE MONTH

Pride Month is recognized nationally each June and this past Pride Month served as a time to reflect on the progress made and the path ahead to build a USask community that is inclusive and equitable for all. It was also a powerful reminder of our commitment to be the university the world needs—a place where everyone feels safe and valued—and of the active participation required to achieve this goal. USask hosted its annual flag-raising ceremony on May 30, signalling our commitment to fostering an inclusive and positive teaching, learning, and working environment. Many members of the USask community participated in events across Saskatchewan throughout June, including Pride Weeks and parades in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert. The USask community walked in the Saskatoon Pride Parade on June 22.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

VIDO SUMMIT and 50TH ANNIVERSARY

2025 marks half a century of innovative research and cutting-edge science for the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), one of USask's flagship research centres. The week of Sept. 22-26 was marked with events that celebrated the research centre's history of world-class innovation, including a gala celebration on Sept. 25.

VIDO has taken important steps over the past few years to be recognized as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research. Founded in 1975 as a Prairie-based livestock lab, VIDO has since grown into one of the world's leading infectious disease research centres. Occupying nearly 10 acres on the USask campus, VIDO is recognized as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research and a leading national science facility. The organization plays a pivotal role in the global race to stop emerging infectious diseases and strengthens Canada's vaccine sovereignty. VIDO has taken important steps over the past few years to be recognized as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research.

VIDO is home to more than 200 scientists, trainees, technicians and staff. [The organization is a key Canadian partner in the global "100 Days Mission", an initiative spearheaded by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations \(CEPI\) and endorsed by the G7 and G20 nations.](#) The mission aims to create new vaccines within 100 days of identifying a pandemic threat. Building on its leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, when VIDO isolated SARS-CoV-2 from the first Canadian case and was the first Canadian academic institution to move a vaccine candidate into clinical trials, the organization is now developing a broadly protective and adaptable coronavirus "platform vaccine" with millions in funding from CEPI.

Some key initiatives that have occurred since the COVID-19 pandemic to promote the organization as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research include:

- establishing an in-house Containment Level 3 capable vaccine manufacturing facility (complete);
- currently developing Containment Level 4 capacity, to be completed in the near future (ongoing);
- building a new animal housing facility with the flexibility to house a variety of key species and vectors (such as ticks), to be completed in the near future (ongoing); and
- attracting new talent to expand our expertise and train the next generation of scientists.

USASK GERMANY TRIP STRENGTHENS INDUSTRY, RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

As part of the University Plan 2025 and the International Blueprint for Action 2025, USask places a strong emphasis on its internationalization strategy, with the goal of strengthening the institution's partnerships and relationships with the global community. A Saskatchewan delegation travelled to Germany in late March to foster strong research and economic connections through several key events. The delegation consisted of USask senior leaders and Government of Saskatchewan representatives, including Saskatchewan Premier Scott

Moe. The delegation started the mission with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Die Stiftung Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover (TiHo), one of the top veterinary medicine schools in Germany. TiHo is world renowned for its innovative research and advancements into veterinary science fields like animal health, food safety, and zoonotic diseases. USask has already established a strong relationship with TiHo researchers, and this new MOU formalizes that relationship to further connections in research and education and foster connections between Saskatchewan and the world.

NEW USASK INFRASTRUCTURE TO BOLSTER AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

USask has received \$11.8 million in funding for two new facilities that will provide critical workspace for crop and soil science research and teaching. Located on the USask Saskatoon campus, the Harrington Plant Growth Facility and the Soil Science Field Facility will provide capacity to expand research programs and enhance training opportunities for students in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources and the Crop Development Centre (CDC) at USask. The project will also include a renovation to a portion of the Crop Science Field Lab at USask to provide additional workspace for the CDC. Construction is underway and is expected to be completed in July 2026.

Funding for the project includes \$7 million from Western Grains Research Foundation, \$2.3 million from the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, \$1 million from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture through the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership, \$850,000 from the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission, and \$400,000 from the Saskatchewan Oilseeds Development Commission. Additional funding has also been provided by BASF Canada, the Saskatchewan Cattle Association, SeCan, Bob and Norma McKercher, the Saskatchewan Alfalfa Seed Producers Development Commission, the Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission, and SaskOats.

USASK RESEARCHERS PUBLISH FIRST CANADIAN GUIDELINES FOR SPINAL BULBAR MUSCULAR ATROPHY

USask researchers have published the first Canadian clinical guidelines for Spinal Bulbar Muscular Atrophy (SBMA), a rare hereditary neuromuscular disorder. The guidelines, titled *Best Practice Recommendations for the Clinical Care of Spinal Bulbar Muscular Atrophy*, were published on September 22 in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Led by Dr. Kerri Schellenberg (MD), associate professor, neurology, in the Department of Medicine, the project represents a landmark in improving care for SBMA patients across

Canada. Until now, the only existing guidelines for SBMA were published in France and did not address symptoms for female carriers or cultural responsiveness, which is a need in Canada. The new Canadian guidelines address these gaps and offer additional recommendations for the multidisciplinary nature of the disease, including managing cardiac, endocrine, sensory and speech-related complications.

PARTNERSHIP EXTENSION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL VACCINE INSTITUTE

The Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) at USask and the International Vaccine Institute have extended their long-standing partnership to strengthen global collaboration on infectious disease research and vaccine development, reinforcing Saskatchewan's role as a leader in science and innovation. The International Vaccine Institute is based in South Korea, and the partnership with VIDO focuses on post-pandemic global health. Hon. Warren Kaeding, Minister of Trade and Export Development and Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan, witnessed the signing as part of his trade mission to South Korea.

USASK HOSTED NOBEL PRIZE WINNER AND HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENT

On May 12-13, USask hosted Nobel Prize-winning scientist Dr. Emmanuelle Charpentier (PhD). She received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry alongside Dr. Jennifer Doudna (PhD) in 2020 for their development of the CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing methodology. That work, which allows scientists to precisely examine, cut and edit genes, has led to massive strides in fields like molecular genetics, genomics, agriculture, and environmental biology. Her USask itinerary consisted of a lecture for high school students about her work, career and advice for aspiring scientists, as well as a tour USask's world-renowned Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization facilities and a special event for over 400 USask faculty, students, staff, and alumni, where she provided a deep dive into the work that has cemented her reputation on the world stage and helped earn her a Nobel Prize. The trip to USask and lectures from Emmanuelle were made possible in collaboration with The Gairdner Foundation. In 2024, Emmanuelle was given an Honorary Doctor of Science from USask, the university's most prestigious honour.