Opening of the USask Community Centre

The official opening of the USask Community Centre took place on January 29th. This is an important gathering place for our student community to seek connections, support, and education around health and wellness. The launch also took place on a significant day dedicated to ending stigma around mental health – Bell Let’s Talk Day. The mental health of our students and campus-wide community is a key priority and it is important that programs to support and educate students on health and wellness are available and accessible.

USask researchers assist with coronavirus vaccine development

In mid-January, our university appeared on the national and international stage as USask’s VIDO-Intervac researchers received permission from the Public Health Agency of Canada to assist in the global effort in developing a vaccine for the coronavirus. Dr. Volker Gerdts, Director of VIDO-Intervac, is leading this initiative at the on-campus facility that is approved to handle Level 3 pathogens. There are also a number of USask researchers involved in the coronavirus work, in particular Drs. Darryl Falzarano and Qiang Liu, both coronavirus experts.

CJ Mackenzie Gala of Engineering Excellence honours Dr. Brad Polischuk

In January, I had the pleasure of attending the 44th annual C.J. Mackenzie Gala of Engineering Excellence, a cornerstone event for the College of Engineering. Founded in 1976, the event is a well-known celebration of students, faculty and staff who come together with engineering professionals from across the province to honor prominent engineering alumni. This year, electrical engineering alumnus Dr. Brad Polischuk (BE ’88, MSc’90, PhD’93) was named the C.J. Mackenzie Gala of Engineering Excellence Distinguished Lecturer. Dr. Polischuk is the Vice President of Research and Development for Hologic, a medical technology company. His work in medical imaging technology – research that started here at USask with Dr. Safa Kasap – has had enormous impact, helping medical professionals give patients the information they need to make critical decisions about their healthcare.

USask Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) signs MOU with Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC)

On a recent mission to Bangladesh, a number of USask representatives, including those from the Global Institute of Food Security (GIFS), had the opportunity to sign an MOU with the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) of the Bangladesh Ministry of Agriculture. The
MOU is designed to enhance a multidisciplinary research, training and development partnership that will help promote sustainable food security in the country. A joint consortium between GIFS and BARC will work with partners in Canada and Bangladesh to deliver programs focused on improving farmer incomes, addressing the effects of climate change in Bangladesh, and strengthening the country’s delivery of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Other USask representatives on the mission included the Global Institute for Water Security (GIWS); the Colleges of Agriculture and Bioresources, Arts and Science, and Pharmacy and Nutrition; and the Canadian Light Source.

**USask research chair receives $2.35M to study beef cattle health and productivity**

USask researcher, Dr. Cheryl Waldner, will undertake a five-year research program to study beef cattle health and productivity. As the NSERC/BCRC Industrial Research Chair in One Health and Production-Limiting Diseases, Waldner will work with the industry to address priorities of Canada’s beef producers across the beef value chain—from improved herd health, to expanded surveillance of antibiotic use and resistance, to increased uptake of best practices for herd management. As noted in the release, among the reasons USask was chosen for the chair—in addition to Waldner’s research record and previous collaborations with BCRC—are the critical mass of beef researchers at WCVM and the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, along with access to the new USask Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence.

**Note of congratulations to Brent Cotter**

I wish to extend my congratulations to Brent Cotter, QC, (BComm’71), a distinguished USask graduate and College of Law professor, who was appointed a member of the Senate of Canada on January 31. This is an exceptional achievement for one of our most accomplished alumni, faculty members, and leaders; and is a wonderful example of how members of our university strengthen communities and nations. Brent joins fellow USask alumni Lillian Dyck and Denise Batters currently serving as members of the Senate of Canada.