AGENDA ITEM: 8.0

Provost’s Report to Council

February 2020

GENERAL REMARKS

At the February Council February 20, 2020, I will update Council on the proposed major changes that to enhance graduate student funding and new graduate tuition funding levels for domestic and international students. With these changes, we believe many graduate students will benefit from more support than previously offered and to focus on supporting a better graduate student experience. I will present details for proposed graduate student financial support and tuition that will take us to 2024-25.

We are proposing a way forward to ensure our graduate students continue to have one of the best educational experiences at our institution. As a result of a comprehensive review of graduate student financial support and tuition levels, we are considering increasing graduate tuition by approximately 10 per cent per year for five years (with the international differential multiplier increasing by 6.9 per cent per year for five years). Most important, we will work to ensure that students with financial needs do not face economic barriers. As such, an estimated two-thirds of the proposed annual incremental tuition (proposed $10 million per year by 2025) will be allocated to increased student financial support each year. The remainder will be used to support graduate excellence in research, teaching and learning.

This tuition proposal is based on the application of University Board-approved principles of comparability, access and affordability, enabling quality, predictability, and transparency through consultation, which is currently ongoing at USask. Tuition rates are set in advance of the annual provincial budget announcement and are not set in relation to provincial funding.

To ensure that students currently enrolled in graduate programs at USask are not put at a disadvantage by these proposed tuition increases, it is proposed that graduate students will receive bursaries to partially offset the increase (bursaries will be available for every student continuing in a program in 2020/21 with master’s students are eligible up to one year and doctoral students being eligible for up to three years).

Additionally, it is proposed that we will implement an “international differential tuition scholarships” in September 2020, awarded to new international students who will be registering in a thesis-based program. The value of the scholarships will be equal to the difference between the amount of tuition assessed to an international student and the amount assessed to a domestic student.

Most important, beginning September 2022, we will offer additional scholarships to new graduate students registered in thesis-based programs and receiving stipends from Tri-Agency (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) research funds, that would enable them to receive scholarship awards that would matching their stipends to a predetermined maximum.
While the proposed tuition change would bring USask graduate tuition levels only to the current median U15 graduate tuition rate, the exceptional program quality, increased student aid, and comparable affordability for students studying, living, and working in Saskatoon and surrounding areas will continue to benefit graduate students here.

We will continue to consult with GSA student leadership, faculty and decanal leadership teams to assure that current and future students have the best graduate student experience that the University of Saskatchewan can offer.

COLLEGE AND SCHOOL UPDATES

Arts and Science
Students in the College of Arts & Science celebrated milestones in their academic careers at three college Pinning Ceremonies in January. Hundreds of students were presented with gold and silver pins by members of the college Dean’s Executive Committee at the ceremonies at Convocation Hall. A new tradition that began in 2019, students on the Dean’s List – recognizing those with academic averages in the top five per cent of their programs – were presented with gold Arts & Science college pins. The event was expanded in 2020 with two additional ceremonies honoring students in their third year of studies and having declared a major who were presented with silver Arts & Science pins. Kenzy Horudko, a third-year student of psychology who attended the January 15 ceremony, was happy to be recognized. Receiving a pin is a symbol of all her hard work and something her children can be very proud of.

Lands of Lost Borders, the award-winning travel memoir by Kate Harris, is the official selection of the 2020 Arts & Science Book Club. Read the book this winter and meet the author at two Book Club Events that will take place on campus on Wednesday, March 4, 2020.

A reading and discussion with Kate Harris will take place in the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

The annual My Writing Life lecture will be held in GSA Commons from 7:00 – 8:45 p.m. Both events are free to attend.

The College of Arts & Science’s Alumni of Influence Awards celebrate outstanding alumni whose remarkable achievements and contributions are having an impact on their fields, their community and the university. The Alumni of Influence Ceremony will be held on Friday, March 27 from 5:30 – 9:00 pm at TCU Place.

The Think Big – Be Bold Plan 2025 Milestones Celebration Day, scheduled for March 2, 2020, will be a full day dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the creativity and ingenuity of College of Arts & Science students, faculty and staff.

The College of Arts and Science is partnering with Bishop James Mahoney High School to offer post-secondary courses to a select cohort of grade-twelve students enrolled in the school’s celebrated Health and Sciences Academy. Many parties on campus contributed to this ground-breaking initiative, including the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Registrar, and the U.S.S.U. Thanks to the enthusiastic backing and support of our Biology Department, BIOL 120.3 is the first course offering, starting at the end of January 2020. This
foundational course offers an early start to students setting out on a STEM path, (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), and is an important recruiting opportunity for USask.

For more news and events please visit: http://artsandscience.usask.ca/news/