Hybrid approach to winter term

The university is planning for a continued hybrid approach to program delivery for winter term, which begins January 2021 through to at least the end of April 2021.

Similar to fall term, the hybrid delivery model will combine primarily remote online learning, with limited clinical, laboratory and other physical instruction only where required to meet specific teaching goals and where circumstances permit, in consultation with public health and Saskatchewan’s Chief Medical Health Officer. Information on specific courses will be communicated by colleges and schools in the coming month.

This direction aligns with other post-secondary sector partners in Saskatchewan and is based on consultation with key stakeholders along with the comprehensive analysis and planning work done with current pandemic knowledge and projections by our Pandemic Response and Recovery Team (PRT). The planned direction provides the programming flexibility needed to manage the potential risks while ensuring the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff. Consistent with the approach taken in fall, academic program planning and decision-making will stem from discussions within colleges followed by a university-level confirmation to ensure coordination. A draft winter term implementation plan is available on the USask COVID-19 website for our campus community to review.

The safety and well-being of our campus communities is our number one priority, and we will continue to work closely with public health officials as we move through the pandemic. For continued campus safety, all staff currently working remotely will continue to work remotely, until further notice. This helps ensure the health and safety for those students, staff, and faculty who are required to be on campus.

I appreciate the innovation and flexibility that has been shown over the past several months as we continue to adapt to the changes brought on by the pandemic. With thoughtfulness, responsiveness and resiliency, we will continue to work with the province to adjust our plans as necessary as we remain focused on delivering our world-class academic programming and research.
Enrolment at USask up for fall term

At the beginning of fall term, enrolment at USask was up by two per cent and on track to be the university’s highest enrolment ever. As of the first day of classes, undergraduate enrolment increased significantly (2.4 per cent) with growth among both Canadian and international students. Graduate enrolment on the first day was similar to last year, with an increase in Canadian graduate students (2.5 per cent); however, international graduate student enrolment was down. Indigenous student enrolment was up (1.1 per cent) as of the first day of classes, with all of the growth at the undergraduate level. Based on these numbers, it is expected that student enrolment will exceed 26,000 by April 2021, the highest enrolment in USask history. A full analysis of our fall term enrolment numbers will take place after our census day in October.

Dr. Baljit Singh chosen to lead USask Vice-President Research Office

Following an extensive national and international search, I am pleased to report that Dr. Baljit Singh, a highly accomplished veterinary researcher, educator and administrator, will join USask as vice-president research, effective February 1, 2021. Singh, who spent 17 years at USask, including as associate dean of research for USask’s Western College of Veterinary Medicine from 2011 to 2016, is currently dean of veterinary medicine at the University of Calgary. He will succeed Dr. Karen Chad, who has served as USask vice-president research since 2008 and has agreed to stay on in the role until Jan. 31, 2021. I will find an opportunity to more fully celebrate Dr. Chad’s many accomplishments in the role at a later date.

USask faculty members honoured by the Royal Society of Canada

I am delighted to congratulate five USask faculty members who have recently been honored by the Royal Society of Canada (RSC), the national academy of distinguished scholars, scientists, artists and humanists.

- **Dr. Valerie Korinek**, history professor and vice-dean of faculty relations in the College of Arts and Science, has been named a Fellow of the RSC. She is recognized nationally and internationally as a leading cultural and gender historian, whose unconventional and bold research has challenged accepted narratives about feminism and queerness in 20th century Canada.

- **Professor Alison Norlen**, in the department of art and art history in the College of Arts and Science, has been named a Fellow of the RSC. She is widely recognized in Canada and abroad as a compelling contemporary Canadian artist, known for her massive mixed-media artworks, intricately crafted wire sculptures, and bold installations that have captivated audiences across the country and around the world.

- **Dr. Christy Morrissey**, a highly regarded international leader in avian and aquatic ecotoxicology, has been named a member of RSC’s College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists which celebrates research excellence at an early career stage. Her innovative and highly regarded research on the impacts of agricultural pesticides on wild bird populations, migratory birds, and prairie wetland ecosystems has directly influenced policy changes by governments in Canada and around the world on the safety and use of these chemicals.

- **Dr. Irena Creed**, professor in the School of Environment and Sustainability and associate vice-president research, is only the second woman to receive RSC’s Bancroft Award since the awards were initiated in 1968 to honour outstanding contributions to earth sciences. Dr. Creed, whose research integrates hydrology, biogeochemistry, and ecology, is internationally recognized for providing a deeper understanding of global climate change and pollution effects on watershed functions and services they provide, such as water purification and reducing the risk of harmful algae blooms.
• **Dr. Ajay Dalai**, USask Canada Research Chair of Bio-energy and Environmentally Friendly Chemical Processing and distinguished professor in chemical and biological engineering, has been awarded RSC’s Miroslaw Romanowski Medal for outstanding contributions to environmental science. Dr. Dalai is an internationally renowned chemical engineer whose leading-edge research on renewable energy, heavy oil and gas processing, and environmentally safe remediation of wastewater and waste gas streams has made a major impact on producing biofuels and synthetic gas.

**Dr. Jay Famiglietti honoured with prestigious international lifetime award**

I would like to congratulate USask hydrologist, Dr. Jay Famiglietti, who has been awarded the 2020 Hydrologic Sciences Award by the American Geophysical Union (AGU) for outstanding contributions to the science of water over his career.

Dr. Famiglietti, executive director of USask’s [Global Institute for Water Security](#) (GIWS), has led the development of novel remote sensing tools for hydrology and water security, particularly the capability to do remote sensing of groundwater using the NASA Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) satellite mission. These satellite remote sensing techniques and advanced computer models have made it possible to document how the water cycle and freshwater resources are affected by climate change and to map how water availability is changing globally. Dr. Famiglietti, a faculty member in both the Department of Geography and Planning, and the School of Environment and Sustainability, was recruited in 2018 from the U.S. where he had been senior water scientist with NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

**USask partners with Sask. First Nation to open Northern community dental clinic**

The College of Dentistry has partnered with the Big River First Nation to launch a new dental clinic, providing service to a community with limited access to oral healthcare. The clinic, which officially started taking patients on Sept. 28, is located in the Big River First Nation Health Centre. Prior to its opening, community members would have to travel to the nearest dental clinics in Shellbrook, Prince Albert or Saskatoon. The new dental clinic will offer diagnostic, treatment and preventative services. It will operate on scheduled days based on demand, with extended hours—including some evenings and weekends—for flexibility to access.

**USask, Meewasin sign MOU to better serve community**

In mid-September, USask and the Meewasin Valley Authority (MVA) signed an MOU to increase strategic collaboration efforts on research, education and outreach projects between the two organizations. The MOU will strengthen our long-standing relationship with the MVA, while guiding us to be strategic and responsible about our community contributions. The formal relationship was reinforced at the MVA’s first *Valley Summit* where the MOU virtual signing took place. The areas of work stated in the agreement include: business and infrastructure planning, student experience, research, community outreach and marketing, and project collaboration. The MOU establishes a working group with representation from both USask and MVA to further the collaborative efforts and complement the work already underway between the organizations.