

No.1

Journey

GO FAR, TOGETHER.

**Funding our
students' success**

**Opening a new
GATEway of opportunity**

Making the right choice



Faculty of
Graduate Studies
and Research

UREGINA.CA

Your journey starts here.

AT THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (FGSR), WE ARE EXCITED TO WITNESS AND SUPPORT THE JOURNEY OF MORE THAN 2,260 STUDENTS WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT CREATING A BETTER WORLD.



AZIZ DOUAI
Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR)

Their ability to apply fresh perspectives, breakthrough research and critical thinking is the fuel that drives everything from new discoveries and new businesses to advancements that tackle real-world challenges.

When the work is this vital, we believe our role is to create the education, the environment and the opportunities these leaders of tomorrow need to thrive. For us, it starts the moment of first contact which is why we've invested in SLATE, a new behind-the-scenes registration and admissions system that delivers a seamless and easy-to-navigate experience for students.

This year we've also taken a quantum step forward by providing guaranteed minimum funding for our doctoral students. Ensuring the best and brightest have access to advanced education should not be a luxury few can afford. Now with more than \$500,000 dedicated to offsetting the cost of tuition, PhD students are able to focus more fully on their studies and complete their degrees more quickly. More than \$10 million in available scholarships further boosts access to graduate studies.

We've also amped up efforts to assist students as they transform their thoughts into theses and their ideas into action. Our Summer Research Institute, Startup Bootcamp and Thesis Jumpstart program are just a few of the many ways that we equip our students for success.

Ensuring the best possible student experience is also the reason we focus on networking and helping students build community. Events such as Coffee with the Dean and Grad Night provide a fun and welcoming way to meet other students and faculty. As students progress in their studies, our Reverse Career Fair connects them with potential employers as well as with community, industry and government partners eager to tap into their talents.

And every year as convocation approaches, there is an incredible sense of pride as we watch the creators, innovators and champions of our time step across the stage and into a future brimming with possibilities. For us and for them, the journey continues.



Registration done right!

PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD AS A UNIVERSITY MEANS ENSURING THAT EVERY INTERACTION WITH PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS IS A POSITIVE ONE. THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS WHY FGSR IMPLEMENTED **SLATE**, A NEW SOFTWARE SYSTEM AIMED AT SIMPLIFYING AND STREAMLINING THE APPLICATION PROCESS.





“I believe that the personal connections we make and the time we take to address people’s questions and concerns helps reassure potential students that this is the place to be.”

ALEX GUTTIERRY

Manager of Admissions and Registrations



“We felt that our previous registration system wasn’t as easy to use and that resulted in delays and confusion,” says Alex Gutierrez, Manager of Admissions and Registrations. “Now with the SLATE portal, information is in one place so that applicants can go into the system and select their programs and add their documents and there’s less chance of human error.”

For university administrators, the new system is equally efficient. “Our faculties use the portal to review the applications, make their decisions and send out an acceptance letter. Everyone can find the information they need, when they need it.”

In addition to accessibility, Gutierrez believes the benefits of SLATE are far-reaching. “Our new system not only saves time for both students and staff but it reduces frustration and prevents students from missing submissions of information. It’s very user-friendly and that affects how students view their experience with FGSR right from day one.”

While SLATE is an important tool in recruitment and retention, one of the strengths at FGSR is the ability for students to ask questions and get advice from the Admissions and Registration Teams.

Kerrie Uwah, now pursuing a Masters in Engineering, was no stranger to university registration systems when it came time to register at FGSR. “I have two Masters degrees from other international universities but, when I emigrated from Nigeria to Canada, I wanted to have a Canadian degree to help advance my career opportunities.”

Uwah found the registration portal easy to use. “I found the information I needed quickly but as a newcomer to Canada I had a few more questions and wanted to talk to someone directly. I was able to talk to an Admissions Officer and that direct contact provided me with the confidence and understanding I needed to finalize my application. It was very smooth and the people were very responsive.”

That’s exactly what Gutierrez wants to hear. “Our staff really cares and they’re here to jump in and help guide people through the process. I believe that the personal connections we make and the time we take to address people’s questions and concerns helps reassure potential students that this is the place to be.”

Funding our students' success

LOOK AT THE PROFILE OF STUDENTS IN FGSR AND YOU QUICKLY REALIZE THEY HAVE A LOT ON THEIR PLATES.



“This is a group of students at a different stage of life,” says Emilie Kossick, Manager of Grad Scholarships and Awards. “They could be parents with responsibilities or students coming from overseas to improve their education, and so the idea of trying to achieve at the PhD level while they’re holding down a job and managing a home life can be daunting.”

Recognizing the challenges and expenses that students face, FGSR launched a Guaranteed Minimum Funding Program for PhD students. “This is our first year and we have provided each of our 65 new PhD students with \$15,500 per year in funding with half coming from FGSR and the other half from our faculties. School is expensive and this allows students to focus more on their research without having to work as much outside of their own labs.”

In a competitive landscape, having funding in place becomes an essential tool for attracting top talent. “This is another valuable tool in our arsenal particularly as we’re competing against other universities who may offer guaranteed income. Students now know that if they come here for a PhD, that box is checked.”





“This is another valuable tool in our arsenal particularly as we’re competing against other universities who may offer guaranteed income. Students now know that if they come here for a PhD, that box is checked.”

– EMILIE KOSSICK, *Manager of Grad Scholarships and Awards*



As the program unfolds so too will the benefits. “I think by offering this level of funding we’re going to attract an even higher quality of graduate student and there will be less stress over funding,” says Kossick. “I also think that they can complete their degrees more quickly if they don’t have to work at the same time.”

While this is the first year of the program, guaranteed minimum funding is provided in each subsequent year which means that in four years a total of more than \$2 million will be invested to support over 200 doctoral students.

“We’re really excited about the difference this can make in our students’ lives,” adds Kossick. “When I see how smart they are, it gives me hope for the future. These are scholars whose priority is advancing important research and this will give them the security and confidence they need to choose FGSR.”

Opening a new GATEway of opportunity



WHEN PROVIDING THE BEST POSSIBLE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IS THE FOCUS, IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT THERE'S A STAFF PERSON WHOSE TITLE IS STUDENT EXPERIENCE COORDINATOR. WENDY FORSBERG TOOK ON THAT ROLE AND BELIEVES IT'S ONE OF THE THINGS THAT SETS FGSR APART.



“My work is to engage with the students as well as to create workshops and a sense of community to help them succeed.”

“Because we’re a bit smaller than some of the bigger institutions, we know our students by name and by sight. My work is to engage with the students as well as to create workshops and a sense of community to help them succeed.”

Through networking activities, such as Coffee with the Dean, the events bring students together. “We create a casual and comfortable space for students from other faculties to meet or talk to the Dean and staff. “A lot of students are international and may not know anyone.”

WENDY FORSBERG
Student Experience Coordinator



This year at Grad Night at the Owl, an informal event where graduate students gather for socializing and snacks at the University's pub, The Lazy Owl, Forsberg is adding a few extra touches to promote networking and community. "We're introducing nametags that feature the students' country of origin and faculty and we're also doing a three-minute 'musical chairs' type of event so people can move around and get to know more people."

Her work extends beyond social activities to creating workshops that showcase student research. The Summer Research Institute is a series of interactive workshops and training sessions focused on learning key research skills as well as the skills to communicate and present their research to a broader audience. "This professional development initiative is available to both graduate and undergraduate students who use this opportunity to prepare for future studies or a future career."

Building a robust culture of professional development, career readiness and entrepreneurship is also at the core of The Graduate Advanced Training and Entrepreneurship (GATE) Centre, which was launched in 2024.

Ashley Dennison, Manager of Events & Special Projects at GATE, says the reason GATE was formed was because of student demand. "The research that our grad students are doing often leads to the creation of business ventures, so they were asking for more entrepreneurship programs."

One of those programs is StartUp 101 Bootcamp, a three-day event in which students gain insights into startups, develop their business concepts and create a compelling pitch. Ideas are presented to industry judges for a chance to win money to develop their startup. "This year we really ramped up the program and had a 300% increase in participation over the previous year," says Dennison.

With a total prize pool of \$10,000 on the line, students had three and a half minutes to outline their pitch while judges had one minute to ask questions. For Master's student Eftakhair Bhuiya, the experience was a confidence booster. "I'm working on a startup business that builds a connection between investors and small and mid-sized farmers. I won the People's Choice Award and the experience really helped me with networking."



“We’ve developed a lot of partnerships both within the university and with community partners that allow students to build those industry connections.”

ASHLEY DENNISON

*Manager of Events &
Special Projects at GATE*



Building networks is essential which is why GATE collaborates with a wide variety of partners. “Knowing the right people and understanding the eco-system of Regina is so valuable,” notes Dennison. “We’ve developed a lot of partnerships both within the university and with community partners that allow students to build those industry connections.”

Those relationships are also in the spotlight at the Reverse Career Fair. “It’s sort of like speed dating between our students and potential employers,” laughs Dennison. “We match our students’ interests with potential careers and each employer gets six to eight minutes to talk to each student. It’s very job specific and career focused. We’ve been sold out the past two semesters and we have seen a really high hiring rate as a result.”

Bhuiya, who arrived as an international student in 2024, also signed up for the Reverse Career Fair. “When I first came to Canada I wasn’t sure how to expand my network so I started working with GATE. They helped me so much when I was looking for a job – they even provided a reference for me!”

Dennison thinks Bhuiya exemplifies the importance of GATE. “Eftakhar is such a success story because he’s participated in so many of our professional development workshops, won awards and he’s a brilliant man who will go on to do great things. That’s exactly why we do what we do.”

Clearly the work is paying off. “The people at GATE are more than just mentors,” says Bhuiya. “They’ve become well-wishers and friends. They went beyond my expectations in preparing me for the future and I’m truly grateful.”

“The people at GATE are more than just mentors. They’ve become well-wishers and friends. They went beyond my expectations in preparing me for the future and I’m truly grateful.”

– EFTAKHAIR BHUIYA,
Master’s student



A growing scholarship program helps students thrive

SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AN INCREDIBLE SOURCE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THAT REDUCE FINANCIAL STRESS AND THE ECONOMIC BARRIERS THAT SOME STUDENTS FACE.



For Laura Schnell, now on her way to earning a PhD in Biology, FGSR's growing scholarship program was an important factor when choosing where to study. "Scholarships were a key consideration when I was debating my options. I liked the way that the University of Regina's program seemed more supportive of students. Here you can apply for multiple awards in multiple areas while other institutions only allow you to apply for one."

FGSR, which has more than \$10 million in provincial and federal scholarships under management, works hard to ensure students are aware of the options and how to successfully apply.



“A lot of my friends have loans or other jobs to make ends meet, but by getting these scholarships I can focus fully on doing my research.”

– LAURA SCHNELL, *Student*

“We list all of the potential scholarships on our website as well as the qualifications and deadlines for applying,” says Emilie Kossick, Manager of Grad Scholarships and Awards. “We also offer a series of webinars to guide them through the process.”

Schnell was appreciative of that support as she navigated the opportunities. “I attended FGSR’s webinars and that was instrumental in learning what to highlight, what to include in the proposal and even how to format my CV.”

After submitting research proposals and a solid plan, Schnell learned she had received not one, but two significant scholarships: the Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor award of \$20,000 and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) scholarship of \$40,000 per year.

The provincial award covered a year of my living costs,” says Schnell, “while the NSERC scholarship provides me with three years of funding to rely on while I’m doing my research. A lot of my friends have loans or other jobs to make ends meet, but by getting these scholarships I can focus fully on doing my research.”

Kossick says Schnell’s experience is not unique. “We have more than 1350 students receive scholarship funding each year and our scholarship program is growing. This year we’ve added six new donor funded awards that are available to Masters and PhD students.”

With scholarship categories that range from awards for academic excellence to funding for thesis-based students, there are more than 50 scholarships that students can apply for throughout the year.

“I definitely think that trying for as many opportunities as you can is good,” says Schnell. “Don’t self-eliminate and think that someone else is more qualified than you. FGSR is there to help connect us to different funding opportunities and to answer questions. Now I ask “what’s possible?” and that’s helped me to get even more out of my experience here.”

Making the right choice

SO, YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED INTO FGSR, FIGURED OUT THE SUBJECT OF YOUR THESIS AND NOW YOU'RE STUCK.



“I don't know where to start' and 'How am I supposed to know how to write a thesis when I've never done one before' are just a couple of the common dilemmas that grad students face,” says Tania Gates, Thesis and Defense Coordinator.

Indeed, grad students have many talents but writing may not be at the top of the list. “Perhaps a student is a musician or they are coming here to find engineering solutions, or conduct research on the health of forests,” says Gates. “Now they are faced with the nuts and bolts of writing and they may even be embarrassed to ask for help. That's where we step in.”

One program designed to get the process moving is Thesis Jumpstart, a focused two-day retreat for master's and doctoral students looking to make real progress on their writing goals. “This has been a popular program that we've run three times now,” says Gates. “We provide expert presentations on key thesis topics, give students writing guidance and create the dedicated time and space they need to write.”

Participants are encouraged to bring in whatever they're working on whether that's their whole thesis, a chapter or maybe they haven't even started the process yet but want some insights on how to start. “Part of the beauty of the Thesis Jumpstart program is that it builds momentum and accountability but it also helps people realize that they're not alone. They can connect with other students facing the same challenges or they can talk to our writing tutors.”

“Part of the beauty of the Thesis Jumpstart program is that it builds momentum and accountability but it also helps people realize that they’re not alone.”

– TANIA GATES, *Thesis and Defense Coordinator*



That’s exactly what Hui Xu, PhD candidate was hoping to gain from the program when she registered. “Doing a PhD can be a lonely journey because most of the time you’re working on your own. Having a community around you means you can share progress, goals, and frustrations and have people who encourage you. I also work better and stay focused when everyone around me is writing.”

As students prepare to defend their work, there are more supports in place including the FGSR website which outlines every step in the process and a series of informational presentations to help them cross the finish line.

Xu was one of the students who took advantage of the variety of sessions available. “If you are new and haven’t started your research, these sessions can help you create a blueprint,” she notes. “If you are in the middle of your research, they give you ideas on how to adjust your approach to improve your work. And if you are close to finishing, they have practical advice on formatting and submission defense. There’s something for whatever stage you’re at.”

“One of the seminars we host is a backwards planning session,” adds Gates. “It allows students to do some realistic planning in terms of figuring out where they are at and how much more time and work is needed to complete their theses. It is wildly popular.”

Also popular with Xu is Thesis Thursday. “Every Thursday morning we have this focused writing time and you can ask questions. In the first 5-10 minutes, we introduce ourselves and share our goals and then start to write. At the end we talk about whether we’ve achieved our goals. I’ve been going to these weekly writing sessions for three years, even before I started writing my thesis,” she says. “At first I used the time for assignments and conference proposals and later for thesis writing. This is time I set aside for focused writing and it helps me to create a more disciplined writing routine.”

For Xu, the programs and personal assistance have been invaluable. “Each time I attend a session I come away with something new. I would recommend all thesis students join at least one session of the Thesis Jumpstart program or talk to Tania. She has all the resources you need and I feel lucky we have her to support us.”

Providing that support is a priority for FGSR. “Our role is to help smooth the way and add value,” Gates says. “We’re constantly assessing where we can add support and how best to do that. Chances are if a student is having difficulty, then we’ve got a way to help clear the path. Once students realize what’s available to them, they find themselves much further ahead.”

And the winner is...



BAILY HACK
FGSR Master's Student



DEVELOPING A THESIS REQUIRES EXTENSIVE ORIGINAL RESEARCH, THOROUGH DATA ANALYSIS ON COMPLEX SUBJECT MATTER AND THE ABILITY TO CONVEY THOSE THEORIES EFFECTIVELY. BUT HOW EFFECTIVE COULD YOU BE IF YOU ONLY HAD A FEW MINUTES TO PRESENT YOUR WORK?

That's exactly the concept behind the Three-Minute Thesis (3MT), an internationally recognized competition for thesis-based graduate students in which participants present their work and its wider impact in just three minutes.

When FGSR Master's student Baily Hack first heard about the competition she wasn't sure if it was right for her. "I'm in the Faculty of Social Work and I had a sense that the competition would be more math- or science-based but I decided to go for it because I really wanted to learn how to be an effective public speaker."

Months of work went into preparing for the competitive event with FGSR providing support every step of the way. Wendy Forsberg, Student Experience Coordinator, says they take a collaborative approach to helping students hone their skills. "We offer workshops and then participants work one-on-one with faculty members and staff to refine and practice their presentations."

For Hack, who hadn't done a lot of public speaking previously, there was a lot to learn. "You only have three minutes to convey hard-to-understand topics and make it accessible for everyone. For me, a huge takeaway was about body language. When I'm nervous I tend to fold into myself a little bit so I needed to learn how to take up space on the stage even when I wasn't feeling that confident."

Competitors started by participating in heats at the University of Regina that were scored by a panel of judges. The top eight students moved onto the finals for a chance to win \$1500 and progress to the Western Regional Final. “Honestly I was terrified” laughs Hack “but I had practiced so much that I had my script memorized which made me feel like I knew what I was doing.”

Clearly others felt the same way as Hack went on to win the top prize. “I had a lot of really amazing people work with me throughout this process and once I became the finalist there was a huge group of people helping me prepare for the Western Regional Final in Victoria. FGSR also funded my travel to attend the event which I really appreciated.”



When Hack landed in Victoria and met the other competitors, she recognized the value of the team around her. “It really hit me that I was the only one there who had people on-site to support me including the Dean of FGSR and the Dean of my Social Work Faculty – it was amazing and they helped keep me calm and focused.”

“It really hit me that I was the only one there who had people on-site to support me including the Dean of FGSR and the Dean of my Social Work Faculty – it was amazing and they helped keep me calm and focused.”

– BAILY HACK, *FGSR Master’s Student*

As she stepped onto the stage, all of the nerves faded. “I just had a sense that I nailed it so I walked away feeling like I had done the best that I could.” While judges voted on the top two finalist prizes, the in-person and online audience could also vote for their top pick. “I ended up winning the People’s Choice award,” says Hack. “I feel like the research I’m doing related to racism in education is important to talk about. Knowing that so many people liked my presentation was huge for me.”

Although initially hesitant to jump into the 3MT competition, Hack would recommend it to anyone. “Regardless of whether you win, it’s about building those important skills. If you want to be a leader in your field or get into teaching or supervising, the ability to present and public speak will be an enormous help in the future.”

This win was a personal one for Hack but the celebration over her success was shared by a proud team at FGSR, including Dean Aziz Douai. “When our students win these national accolades, it’s a real moment of pride not just in our university but in the students and staff who have worked so hard. To see all of their talent and effort bear fruit is incredibly special.”

More news!

In 2024, Michael Mensah, a PhD Biology candidate from the University of Regina went on to win the National 3MT Showcase in Toronto with his presentation “Fresh Solutions for Salty Cows”. This was the first time a student from Saskatchewan had won this prestigious research competition.

FGSR is excited to be hosting the 3MT Western Regional Finals and the National 3MT Showcase in 2026.



MICHAEL MENSAH
*University of Regina
PhD Biology candidate*

Making the right choice

“I ENJOY HELPING PEOPLE AND WOULD LIKE TO TEACH OR BE A LICENSED PSYCHOLOGIST,” SAYS PHD CANDIDATE DANIELLE ADEDUN. “I DIDN’T WANT TO CLOSE ANY DOORS SO IT MADE SENSE FOR ME TO CONTINUE ON AFTER MY MASTERS TO A DOCTORAL DEGREE.”

While that choice seemed like a relatively easy one to make, Adedun looked at a variety of university options before enrolling at FGSR. “I did some research into the supervisors here and found that the Psychology department is highly ranked which is surprising considering the smaller size of the university. The research they’re doing is cutting-edge and there is a lot of flexibility in terms of what you can pursue.”

For Adedun, each learning experience has been unique. “The Masters was compressed into two years and you have your own goals and ideas on how you want to progress. Now the PhD will be at least four years so that time is consumed with more classes, more practicums and more career planning. It’s giving me a chance to pursue a more advanced research project.”

In addition to preparing for her research, Adedun is working as a Teaching Assistant in Personality Psychology, an Undergraduate course offered over the summer. “Grad students are this hybrid – both student and employee – but also the researchers that are contributing to the University in different ways.”

Adedun’s contributions extend to serving as Vice-President of the BIPOC Graduate Association Group, a student-led group that works to build communities of support, solidarity and inclusion. “We host events once or twice per semester and that can be anything from a potluck or bowling night to a networking event with faculty and industry.” FGSR has been really supportive in providing funding for our events and even giving us ideas on how we can reach out to different organizations.”



“It’s great for us to be able to have this access and connection to people higher up in the University so we can candidly share our thoughts about what we need and the ways in which we can be better supported.”

DANIELLE ADEDUN

Vice-President of the BIPOC Graduate Association Group

Making those connections with other students and the broader community has been helpful for Adedun. “I’ve attended Coffee with the Dean and Grad Night and they’ve been a good way to get to know people and understand the systems. It’s great for us to be able to have this access and connection to people higher up in the University so we can candidly share our thoughts about what we need and the ways in which we can be better supported.”

Looking back on the choices she’s made, Adedun is pleased. “I like that there’s a Psychology Training Clinic here which makes it easy to get clinical experience in a university setting, I’ve been awarded two scholarships which has helped to support my studies and I’m really enjoying being in a smaller city where it’s much easier to have a sense of community. Coming to FGSR was definitely the right pick for me.”



Straight from our students



“It’s a small university but when I talk to people at other bigger institutions they get less individual attention. I can email FGSR and get a timely response and I know that doesn’t happen at other places. I also think because we have a similar number of labs as larger universities but fewer students that we have more opportunities to get research experience. It’s been a really great environment for me.”

– LAURA SCHNELL, *PhD Candidate in Psychology*



“The best thing about FGSR is that the people are really nice. They’re kind and they’re generous and they will help each other out which is wonderful.”

– EFTAKHAR BHUIYA, *Masters Student, Administration in Leadership*

“Don’t be afraid to try things because they’re scary – do things that allow you to grow. Have fun, build community and remember this is not going to be your life forever. It’s tough but you’ll look back and be happy that you did it.”

– DANIELLE ADEDUN,
*Masters in Clinical Psychology,
PhD Candidate in Psychology*



“I have attended a lot of workshops and presentations by the researchers here and I am really amazed. I was very proud when I learned about how important their research is and then that makes me proud of being a student here too. One of the things I like about this university is that as an international student, I receive a lot of support from both my faculty and from FGSR.”

– HUI XU,
PhD Candidate in Education

“There is so much amazing research going on in our faculty and in other faculties. My best advice is to get involved. FGSR gives you a lot of ways to meet people, make those connections and learn about all the amazing research that’s being done here. It’s an incredible opportunity for students.”

– BAILY HACK,
Masters Student, Faculty of Social Work

“I enjoy every part of the academic program. I come from a background of various disciplines and also have real-world experience. This program meshes with my experience and gives me another level of knowledge. FGSR really cares about making sure students have a positive outcome.”

– KERRIE UWAH,
Masters Student, Faculty of Engineering





Go far, together.



UREGINA.CA

FGSR@UREGINA.CA

Vision

The University of Regina seeks to reflect the world we want to live in—a world that values empowered citizens, generates high-impact scholarship, and embraces Canada's diversity.

Mission

The U of R's vocation is to explore unanswered questions. We provide high-quality and accessible education, influential research, creative endeavours, and meaningful scholarly experiences in pursuit of local and global contributions to knowledge. Investigation of and reflection upon varied intellectual pursuits is fundamental, and we engage our students in these pursuits, seeking to instill in them a lifelong quest for knowledge and understanding.