

In keeping with the University of Regina's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation as articulated in our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan entitled *All Our Relations - kahkiyaw kiwâhkomâkâninawak*, I begin this report by acknowledging that the University is situated on Treaty 4 territory, with a presence in Treaty 6. This is the ancestral territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda people, and the traditional homeland of the Métis nation.

Per the objectives the Board of Governors approved to guide my work through the 2020-2021 academic year, this report has as its primary focus the stability and sustainability of the University's operations during the pandemic. It also contains an update on progress on the new strategic plan's directions, as well as information related to student satisfaction.

Work on facilitating the transition to a new president will commence when the Board names that individual.

The final section highlights some notable achievements of students, faculty, staff and alumni during the Fall term.

Objective 1

Ensure that the teaching and learning functions of the University continue in the most academically fulfilling way possible for the Spring/Summer 2020, Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 terms.

People in all areas of the University worked hard to ensure that the teaching and learning experience was as fulfilling as possible for students and teaching staff.

For Fall 2020:

- Led by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), the Academic Incremental Restoration working group (AIR) oversaw delivery of Fall 2020 coursework, which for the first time since March included in-person teaching and learning.
- AIR co-ordinated several interrelated working groups: the Information Services working group (chaired by the Associate Vice-President (Information Services)), and the Student Supports and Instructor Supports working groups (both chaired by the Associate Vice-President (Academic)).
- A major project on which these working groups collaborated was the implementation of ProctorTrack for the remote proctoring of mid-term and final examinations. This complex process entailed:

- Ensuring software was operational for more than 100 Fall 2020 courses in which teaching staff have elected to use it as a means of helping ensure academic integrity;
 - Addressing URSU's as well as individual students' concerns about privacy;
 - Creating detailed guidelines for teaching staff using ProctorTrack and for investigating Deans to follow when conducting investigations;
 - Troubleshooting any technical problems that arose;
 - Participating in weekly meetings with the vendor regarding concerns that arose, including regarding ProctorTrack's security breach (which did not compromise any student data) and resulting multi-day disruption of service;
 - Implementing updated software as needed to address the most common concerns and support issues; and
 - Working with the University Library and Faculty of Arts to establish dedicated individual testing sites for students who may not be able to use ProctorTrack in their home environments.
- Some remain opposed to the use of Proctortrack; others report that it is effective in deterring academic misconduct.
 - AIR's working groups collaborated on other activities, including:
 - Student support-focused initiatives such as the laptop loan program and the creation of solo study and exam-writing spaces;
 - A new database architecture and hardware platform for UR Courses to address performance needs;
 - Instructor supports such as webinars and a common help desk; and
 - Technical support for teaching staff and students.
 - The Provost and Vice-President (Academic) held updates with and solicited feedback from all Faculties and units regarding Fall 2020 as well as the forthcoming Winter 2021 term.
 - Other units across the University contributed to the overall teaching and learning experience for Fall 2020:
 - Instructional designers in the Flexible Learning Division of CCE conducted virtual drop-in sessions for those teaching online;
 - The Student Success Centre began providing readers/scribes for virtual live examinations to assist students who require accommodations;
 - To help others with remote teaching, instructors in the Faculty of Arts shared some of their innovations through a feature story on the University website; and
 - Upon his 1 September appointment as Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Dr Alec Couros of the Faculty of Education began developing new programming. This has included drop-in consultation sessions for

academic staff, public presentations on remote teaching and learning, and the development (with CCE's Flexible Learning Division) of the "Welcome to My Remote Course" seminar series.

- The overall student experience remained a priority through the term:
 - University Advancement & Communications (UAC), Counselling Services, and Human Resources launched a "Mental Health Hub" to provide comprehensive information about all mental health supports available to students, faculty and staff;
 - The ta-tawâw Student Centre continued providing virtual social, cultural, mental health, and academic support programming, with increased emphasis on social connection and engagement;
 - The nitôncipâmin omâ student success program is operating remotely for the 15 Indigenous first-year students in the 2020-21 cohort;
 - UR International developed a plan to safely welcome incoming international students and provide them with continuing mental health, cultural, academic, and social engagement supports. The unit also organized a virtual orientation, holds bi-weekly international student town halls to provide support and allow students to share their experiences, and operates virtual drop-in immigration advising sessions;
 - With pandemic-related travel restrictions in place, UR international launched a virtual exchange program for students; and
 - Demand for the Student Emergency Fund has declined. During the Spring/Summer term, the University disbursed more than \$350,000 to nearly 360 students; during Fall 2020, just over \$36,000 was distributed to 36 students.
- Overall enrolment remained strong despite a pandemic-related decline in new international students. By the end of the fourth week of classes in early October, Fall 2020 enrolment was 16,664 students - up one percent compared to Fall 2019. This represented the 12th consecutive year of enrolment growth.

For Winter 2020 and beyond:

- In early October, AIR updated the *Teaching and Learning Framework for the 2020-2021 Academic Year* and shared it on the website at <https://www.uregina.ca/term-updates/assets/docs/pdf/t-l-framework.pdf>.
- The updated framework will see up to 1,500 students undertake in-person coursework in Winter 2021 (less than 10 percent of the overall student population), with the majority of teaching and learning remaining remote.
- Based on this plan for Winter 2021, IPCAT developed criteria for in-person classes, evaluated proposals, and approved approximately 200 low-density in-person courses and course components for Winter 2020. The majority have 14 or fewer students, and all are prepared to pivot to remote delivery should the pandemic require such a transition.

- By 1 December all instructors will have a UR Courses website created to help students prepare for their Winter 2021 courses.
- AIR has also begun work on a *Teaching and Learning Framework for the 2021-2022 Academic Year* that will include plans for the Spring/Summer term.
- AIR's other working groups (Student Supports, Instructor Supports, and Information Services) continued preparing for Winter 2021. That work included developing new remote teaching and remote learning websites for Winter 2021, and extending Zoom licensing to First Nations University of Canada on a cost-recovery basis.
- Preparation for future terms continued in other areas of the University:
 - The AVP (Academic) and the CTL Director shared remote teaching and learning survey results with units that provide relevant student and/or faculty services. They will carry out a follow-up survey in Winter 2021;
 - The Open Educational Resources program (OER) partnered with the Archer Library and CCE to subscribe to the Pressbooks online platform. This will help teaching staff create, adapt, and find open educational materials, including textbooks;
 - The OER Program Manager delivered virtual workshops and drop-in sessions to help teaching staff find and develop quality open educational resources for future courses. A call was also issued for proposals to develop new resources with funding provided by the Ministry of Advanced Education; and
 - UAC is working with consultant Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL) as well as all Faculties and units to develop a new University website for launch in mid-2021.
- Work also took place to enhance the student experience in future terms:
 - By late Winter 2021, the Campus Store will transition to a new management model that will provide additional services and lower costs to students;
 - Planning took place for Winter 2021 domestic and international student orientation;
 - UR International will extend the hours of its Global Learning Centre programming for Winter 2021 to better accommodate students in other time zones. The unit is also adding new social engagement activities to its International Peer Advisor program; and
 - The Office of Institutional Research summarized results from the Canadian Undergraduate Research Consortium's (CUSC) 2020 Middle Years Student Survey. The reports, which will help determine areas where the University can work to improve student satisfaction, may be found at <https://www.uregina.ca/orp/surveys/cusc/middle-years.html>. Some key findings are:
 - University of Regina students are less likely than those at other institutions to participate in student clubs, recreational or sports programs, and campus social events;

- The number of students self-identifying as Indigenous is more than twice the national average, the number of students identifying as a visible minority is two-thirds the national average, and the number of students identifying as having a disability is in line with the national average;
- The number of students driving to campus and using on-campus parking facilities (in pre-pandemic times) is nearly double the national average;
- The percentage of students who believe their professors take a personal interest in their academic progress has declined since 2017, but is at the national average;
- Satisfaction with the quality of teaching is slightly less than the national average.

Objective 2

Ensure that the University's research enterprise is disrupted as little as possible over the next year

The Vice-President (Research) led work to ensure continuity of the research enterprise.

For Fall 2020:

- Effective September 1, the University moved to Phase 3 of the Return to Research Plan. With stringent COVID-19 health and safety protocols in place, under Phase 3 all University buildings may host research activity, the number of individuals who may share a lab or studio has increased, and off-campus research involving human participants may resume.
- Recognizing that graduate students are among the groups most affected by pandemic-related research restrictions, the Office of the Vice-President (Research) hosted a virtual town hall session introducing Phase 3 specifically to graduate students.
- Over the fall term, the number of research risk assessment submissions received per month trended downward. Even so, by 20 November the total number of research projects approved to resume had increased by 52%.
- The Research Office administered the return to research processes throughout the fall, and supported applications for the Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund program. Applications were also co-ordinated and submitted for regular deadlines with CIHR, NSERC, SHRF, and SSHRC.
- The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research did a great deal throughout the fall to enhance the graduate student experience. This included:
 - Providing emergency bursary funding;
 - Using two types of registration waivers for students unable to progress in their program due to the pandemic;

- Developing virtual professional development opportunities for students;
- Reviewing the 2019 Graduate and Professional Student Survey results to identify areas to improve the student experience;
- Participating on the microcredential committee to establish a framework that FGSR could use to develop microcredentials for current and prospective students; and
- Hiring an Indigenous graduate student mentor to develop a program for Indigenous graduate students based on the recommendations from the “Indigenous Graduate-Level Cohort Program Report.”

For Winter 2021 and beyond:

- The Office of the Vice-President (Research) is preparing for an anticipated increase in research risk assessment submissions in Winter 2021 as senior students undertake their honours and capstone research projects.
- Until the removal of all provincial COVID-19 restrictions allows a move to Phase 4, the University will remain in Phase 3 but will continue to monitor the situation, implement improvements indicated by analysis of researcher feedback, and otherwise adjust restrictions as required. To that end, the research satisfaction survey initially conducted in the summer was repeated in the Fall term. Analysis of the responses is in progress.
- The Research Office will continue to coordinate the risk assessment process throughout Winter 2020, support researchers applying for forthcoming funding deadlines, and undertake new initiatives to support sustainability and agriculture research.
- The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research is creating possible microcredentials that students can add to their resume when seeking post-graduation employment, and is creating a new graduate student handbook.
- Throughout Fall 2020, UAC has enhanced media coverage and public awareness of the University’s researchers and their work. This effort will continue through 2021, including through the new website and the opportunities it will provide to highlight research.

Objective 3

Ensure operational continuity and stability across the entire University

Work took place in many units to ensure operational continuity during the pandemic.

For Fall 2020:

- Led by the Vice-President (Administration, the Operations Recovery Committee (ORC) ensured that the University’s facilities and human resource operations continued uninterrupted. Work included:
 - Implementing the September mask mandate for all public and shared spaces. This entailed ensuring compliance and working with those who require accommodations;

- Implementing measures to reduce contact in shared spaces. This was especially important with some instructors and students returning to campus for in-person coursework;
- Distributing information packages on COVID-19 health and safety practices and providing mandatory e-training for those who are on campus;
- Providing intensive COVID-19 health and safety supports to instructors and students on campus for in-person coursework and research;
- Enacting appropriate COVID-19 contact tracing and self-isolation protocols;
- Monitoring public health guidelines and ensuring compliance;
- Using Health Canada-approved COVID-19 products and protocols for cleaning and disinfection, and ensuring adequate ventilation on campus;
- Advising as some campus facilities opened in a limited capacity; and
- Conducting return-to-work risk assessments for Faculties and units.
- The University's technological infrastructure has been critical during the pandemic, and Information Systems took significant steps to ensure its integrity. This included:
 - Undertaking regular system update and patching activities;
 - Upgrading the Oracle database to support upcoming versions of Banner;
 - Enrolling the first applications and users in the multi-factor authentication project designed to improve access security; and
 - Providing technological assistance to those working remotely.
- Financial Services provided budget information critical to addressing the current pandemic-related revenue shortfall.
- Housing Services supported those living in residence throughout the term. This included continuing food services through Luther College.
- I sent a weekly update to campus throughout the term and hosted several virtual town hall sessions to solicit input on the University's operations during the pandemic.

For Winter 2021 and beyond:

- ORC will continue working with provincial health officials to ensure the University's COVID-19 health and safety measures are appropriate and effective. It should be noted that the restriction on in-person campus events and gatherings has been extended to 1 May 2021.
- UAC's work to support University operations will continue in several areas through Winter 2021:
 - The unit will work with ORC and other groups to update the University and wider communities on key pandemic-related developments and their impact on the institution;

- Staff will explore donor and other funding opportunities to support scholarships and research; and
- The unit will finalize Faculty and unit priorities for the forthcoming comprehensive institutional fundraising campaign.
- The University Recovery Planning Group (URP-G) continues its planning and long-term visioning from scientific, strategic, and financial/risk management perspectives. During the fall term:
 - The full group met six times, and its working groups also conducted focused, consultative explorations of Financial Implications, Productivity and Anxiety, Brand and Identity, and Safety and Science;
 - URP-G provided advice to the University Executive Team and contributed to decisions and updates related to student mental wellness, campus and classroom safety, the COVID recovery framework, remote proctoring, and Winter and Fall 2021 planning;
 - URP-G hosted a virtual town hall to provide an open forum for campus feedback and recommendations for ongoing pandemic response and recovery planning activities; and
 - The group also began early-stage modelling for 2021-22, 2022-23 and beyond. Initially focusing on safe use of campus space and resources in Fall 2021, URP-G is considering blended teaching modes that maximize access to on-campus learning while prioritizing safety. University residences and remote workplaces are other prime considerations.
- With student enrolment so critical to the long-term continuity and sustainability of the University's operations, Enrolment Services remains focused on recruitment. The unit worked with the Student Success Centre on a Winter 2021 registration phone campaign, and with UAC and CCE on a "Try a Class" digital campaign. These and other efforts have helped increase the number of offered and accepted new domestic undergraduate applicants for Winter 2021 by four percent and 12 percent respectively compared to last year.
- Likewise, UR International has continued its recruitment, retention, and international partnership activities with an eye to future terms:
 - In Fall 2020, the unit worked with international educational consultants and partner schools to hold virtual admission-on-the-spot events and information sessions for students in several countries. It also attended EduCanada virtual fairs in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Similar activities will take place in Winter 2021;
 - A scholarship agreement was signed with Shandong University to bring Chinese undergraduate students to the University of Regina, and an articulation program with Anhui University in China is being finalized that will replenish student enrolment in mathematics and statistics;

- Marketing material including the 2020-21 viewbook was updated, and beginning in January 2021 the IDP Hotcourses digital platform will enhance connection with students in underrepresented markets; and
- The unit collaborated with Housing Services to develop a new educational video for incoming international students.
- Much work remains to be done, but these collective efforts are beginning to have positive results. Overall enrolment for Winter 2021 as of 27 November was two percent (or 307 students) above the same time last year.
- Looking even further to the future, the strategic enrolment and retention planning projects with RNL continue. The enrolment planning team will meet again with RNL in December to identify enrolment priorities and actions for the new year. In January the retention planning working groups will meet to develop action plans based on six identified areas of retention focus.

Objective 4

Launch the new strategic plan and begin implementing key aspects

Work continued toward implementing key aspects of the new strategic plan:

- The Provost is working with Deans and directors to determine a general approach for developing individual faculty and unit implementation plans. The new Performance Management Framework indices will be placed on the University website, helping Deans and directors as they develop their plans.
- To provide additional context for Faculty and unit planning, the 2015-2020 strategic plan wrap-up document was shared on the University website at <https://www.uregina.ca/strategic-plan/history.html>, and a summary video is now available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_DjMwyJVNY.
- Also to inform Faculty and unit plans, a virtual town hall was held to consult on aspects of the strategic plan to be prioritized or de-emphasized during the pandemic. The consensus was that areas such as sustainability, student retention, and Reconciliation are of particular importance.
- Two other town halls took place related to strategic plan implementation. On 23 October, the Provost and the Vice-President (Research) hosted a session to get input to guide the forthcoming Action Plan on Sustainability. And on 6 November, the Vice-President (Research) hosted a session to inform development of an Action Plan on Research.
- To create awareness of how the University's initiatives and activities support the province as a whole, UAC is developing a document that aligns the content of the new strategic plan with key aspects of the *Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*.
- In October the Faculty of Science signed a partnership agreement with the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council. The Board material includes a document outlining other community-based academic programs that have been initiated this year. These agreements and programs are examples of how the University is strengthening connections with communities and increasing the institution's social impact.

CELEBRATING OUR UNIVERSITY

This report highlights some faculty, staff and student successes as well as other notable campus events since the last Board meeting.

Faculty and staff success

- During the reporting period, many University of Regina researchers succeeded in securing external funding to advance their work, and others received national recognition. Those successes are outlined in the detailed research report that is part of the Board material.
- On September 1, Brad Farquhar began a two-year term as the inaugural Executive in Residence in Agribusiness with the Hill and Levene Schools of Business.
- Board member Chief Cadmus Delorme was recognized at the 2020 ABEX Awards as Community Leader of the Year for his role in developing solutions to social challenges in Saskatchewan.
- At the Association of Fundraising Professionals - South Saskatchewan Chapter's 2020 awards ceremony, Chancellor Pamela Klein was named Outstanding Philanthropist for her service to the provincial community.
- Dr Asiz Douai has been appointed Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research effective 1 January 2021. He is currently Associate Dean of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at Ontario Tech University. I want to thank Dr Nick Jones for his service as Interim Dean of FGSR.
- Karen Brown, Coordinator of Student Awards and Financial Aid, was elected to the Board of the Canadian Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

Student and alumni success

- The 47th annual Fall Convocation took place virtually in October, with 739 degrees, diplomas and certificates conferred on 714 graduates.
- Electronic Systems Engineering graduate student Usman Munawar was recognized as one of the world's top electronic engineering students. Of 10,000 candidates worldwide, he was one of only five students to receive a 2020 Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineering Power and Energy Society Outstanding Student Scholarship.
- Jennifer Shelly Keturakis, a graduate student in the Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance, was one of only 12 students worldwide to receive a 2020 Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award from the International Sculpture Centre in New Jersey.
- First-year student Wakpa Mckay of Fort Qu'Appelle was named one of 20 RBC Indigenous Student Award winners from across Canada.
- First-year nursing student Callie Morhart received the 2020 Hayley and Cayden Wourms (nee Wilcock) Memorial Scholarship, and dedicated \$500 of the \$3,500 she received through the scholarship to create a series of wellness toolkits.

- SaskMasks - the non-profit organization led by four community-minded students at the Hill School of Business - received the 2020 Outstanding Youth Philanthropist award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals - South Saskatchewan Chapter.
- Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, an alumna with a Certificate in Business Administration, was named Guyana's representative to the United Nations.
- School of Journalism alumna Morgan Campbell began work in early November as co-anchor of CTV's Regina's "News at Six."
- Faculty of Social Work alumna Brittany Hudak was featured in a national CBC online article for her efforts to train for the 2022 Paralympics while working in Calgary as a social worker.
- The French translation of alumna Alix Lwanga's 2015 book *Li'l Shadd: A Story of Ujima*, has been released. The book is about a Black doctor who moved to Melfort in 1904 and was renowned for his dedication to the community.

University events and announcements

The Fall term has seen many other events and announcements at the University. Here are some highlights:

- In mid-November the University hosted a virtual ceremony to mark the repatriation to India of a statue of the Hindu goddess Annapoorna. The piece, which was taken from a shrine in the city of Varanasi by Norman MacKenzie in 1913, was part of the University art collection stewarded by the MacKenzie Art Gallery. The repatriation has generated considerable good will between Canada and India, with Indian Prime Minister Nahendra Modi commending the University and the Canadian government for initiating the process.
- In September, the University partnered with UR Pride to participate in the Queen City Pride Parade.
- The Centre for Continuing Education launched a Business Essentials Program, designed for Saskatchewan businesses affected by the pandemic.
- The Canadian College of Health Leaders awarded LEADS certification to the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy's Master of Health Administration and Excellence in Health Leadership programs.
- The University was named one of the host venues for the 50th annual Saskatchewan Winter Games, to be held in February 2022. The main campus will accommodate approximately 1,700 athletes, coaches and managers on campus, and will host some events.
- The University marked Remembrance Day in several ways. University Advancement & Communications ran a social media campaign and included a feature story on the website. The southwest entrance sign was lighted in red, the flag was lowered to half-mast, and a wreath was laid at the cenotaph in Regina.
- By the end of November, the University's annual United Way campaign had raised nearly \$80,000 toward its goal of \$85,000.