

September 1 – November 23, 2021

The following report provides a general overview of my engagement with the University and wider communities during the reporting period, as well as progress made toward my six strategic objectives for the year that were finalized at the September Board meeting. Should the Board require additional information on any of the items discussed below, I would be happy to provide it either at the December 7 meeting or as follow-up.

Engagement with the University community:

Recognizing that continuing, meaningful engagement with the University community is a priority, during the reporting period I:

- Participated in initial or follow-up meetings (virtually, and when possible, in person) with a variety of Faculty Councils, departments, non-academic units, and student groups;
- Continued my regular meetings with the Federated College Presidents, URSU Executive, and URFA and CUPE leadership;
- Held one-on-one meetings with all directors, Deans, and my direct reports;
- Chaired regular meetings of the University Leadership Team, University Executive Team (as well as the "University Executive Team Plus" group), and Executive of Council. I also participated in my first official meeting of University Senate;
- Visited the Faculties of Nursing and Social Work at the Saskatoon campus;
- Spoke at orientation sessions for new employees;
- Hosted monthly virtual town halls to provide updates to the University community on topics such as budget and COVID-19-related operations;
- Spoke to graduates as part of my installation at Convocation, and personally greeted all graduates as they crossed the stage to receive their degrees, diplomas, and certificates. I also participated in Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann's installation as FNUUniv President;
- Spoke to the University's Ambassador Leaders as well as an upper-level Sports Marketing class;
- Presented on my academic research related to Canadian women and the Second World War as part of the "Research with Impact" series organized by University Advancement & Communications and the Lifelong Learning Centre;
- Worked with student groups such as the English Students' Association to plan my participation in future events;
- Attended events including theatre productions and Cougar and Rams games to show support for our students;
- Participated in a variety of announcements, including signing a renewed partnership agreement with the Regina Rams, attending the Rams game at which the Ryan Family Foundation made a \$200,000 scholarship announcement, opening the Student Wellness Centre, and joining alumnus Dr. Nevan Krogan to announce his \$2 million donation that will allow students from the Children of Haiti project to attend the University of Regina in future years. It is of particular note that we remain in close contact with Dr. Krogan to help widen the University's network related to broader science-based initiatives;

- Provided recorded greetings for a variety of virtual events on campus, including recruitment events and a reception held by La Cité for members of the Fransaskois community;
- Participated in meetings of the University of Regina Alumni Association as an *ex officio* member of its Board;
- Met with more than 20 recent alumni of the University to gain their perspectives on the institution; and
- In accordance with the University's COVID-19 protocols, held in-person campus "meet and greets" open to all faculty and staff.

Engagement with the wider community:

To continue building and enhancing the University's relationships with the wider provincial community, I:

- Met with leadership from the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation and Innovation Saskatchewan to discuss joint programming opportunities;
- Continued my monthly meetings with Regina Mayor Sandra Masters to explore possibilities for collaboration on different initiatives;
- Met regularly with the Presidents of the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Polytechnic;
- Spoke to the Board of Innovation Place;
- Spoke with guidance counsellors from across Saskatchewan in a virtual meeting;
- Met with Chief of the Regina Police Service as well as the heads of the John Howard Society and the Regina and District Food Bank;
- Met with the heads of the Saskatchewan and Regina & District Chambers of Commerce;
- Held meetings via Zoom with donors, alumni, and education, business, political, and community leaders from Estevan, Weyburn, Swift Current, Yorkton, Melville, North Battleford, Melfort, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon. I also travelled to most of those communities (visits to Melfort and North Battleford are currently being planned) for in-person meetings that included discussions with high schools and the Regional Colleges about advancing dual-credit opportunities and developing more fulsome remote programming;
- Began planning for "U of R days" to be held in several communities starting in spring 2022. These events will involve speaking to high school students and their parents, having University representatives (such as from music, athletics, and other selected disciplines) highlight the University, and hosting a public lecture in the evening with a University professor and a remote link to a prominent individual involved with the professor's area of study (for example, a social media expert, or an astronaut for a talk dealing with astronomy).
- Met regularly with the Ministry of Advanced Education and hosted Minister Makowsky on campus at events including the opening of the Student Wellness Centre;
- Met and discussed areas of mutual interest with the Ministries of Education, Energy and Resources, and Public Safety, as well as several government and opposition MLAs and MPs;
- Attended numerous community, business, and government events in Regina. This included speaking at the launch of the province's International Education Strategy, and reading from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report at an event held at the Legislative Building on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation;
- Met with representatives from the Saskatchewan Roughriders and Evraz Place to begin planning a possible annual "Highway 11 Classic" homecoming athletics event with the University of Saskatchewan for Fall 2022. We anticipate assistance from the University of Regina Alumni

Association and the University of Regina Students' Union, and have also had discussions with our counterparts at the University of Saskatchewan;

- Initiated meetings with the Royal Regina Rifles to explore advanced-standing academic programs on the basis of prior training – something that exists at several other universities;
- Met in person with leaders and representatives from the Fransaskois community – including the French-language school division and Collège Mathieu – regarding the potential to enhance French-language presence, profile, and funding and program opportunities;
- Held research-related meetings with different Crown corporations as well as the Saskatchewan Research Council and Western Economic Diversification;
- Continued planning with the not-for-profit group interested in operating Darke Hall;
- Met virtually with the Chinese Ambassador to Canada as well as the Consul General of India, and met in person with the head of the Canada-India Business Council to discuss possible partnerships; and
- Conducted provincial media interviews – mainly radio and television – regarding various announcements and the University's enrolments and pandemic planning.

Objective 1: Bring activity on the University's campuses to a level near that of full pre-pandemic operations

Background: In normal times, the University is well-served by the fact that it prepares early for forthcoming terms. During the unpredictable COVID-19 pandemic, however, this early planning has negatively affected enrolments, and ultimately, the institution's financial situation.

For example, the University's Fall 2021 registration process – which generally begins earlier than those of other institutions in the province – compelled the institution to make scheduling and course delivery decisions in the spring. This was precisely the time during which another wave of the pandemic engulfed the province, and in particular, Regina and area, where the emergence of variants of concern necessitated that all in-person courses transition to remote instruction in late March.

In this context, the University took a cautious approach and framed the Fall 2021 term as a transitional one. Deans and instructors were at liberty to determine the modality of course delivery (i.e., face-to-face, online, or hybrid). In the end, approximately 16 percent of courses took place in person, with roughly 4,500 students on campus. While this early decision was made with the best information available at the time, and while it proved effective in terms of campus health and safety when a fourth wave of the pandemic emerged in late summer and early fall, it resulted in enrolment declines due to student fatigue with online instruction. By contrast, other institutions in the province announced their intentions later, and as a result, were able to offer a larger percentage of in-person courses, and thus did not experience the same degree of enrolment decline.

The consequences of the University's early decision first became evident in the Spring/Summer 2021 term. Initial projections of a slight year-over-year increase in registrations were not realized, and the dichotomy between projections and registrations continued into the Fall 2021 term, during which a projected 2 percent increase in enrolments was in reality a nearly 6 percent decrease in the number of credit hours taught. This increased the annual operating deficit by \$2.5 million, pushing the overall deficit to just over \$6 million for this fiscal year.

For the coming Winter 2022 term, the University is seeing an enrolment “hangover” from Fall 2021, with current year-over-year registration numbers down approximately 5 percent. Given that the path to increased enrolments for future terms lies in safely bringing the University’s in-person coursework, activities, and other operations back to near-pre-pandemic levels, work to that end continued on a variety of fronts, outlined below.

Return to a majority of in-person coursework: During the transitional Fall term, the University implemented or continued a variety of COVID-19 protocols. These included maintaining a mask mandate, and effective October 1, implementing a student, faculty, and staff vaccination requirement with regular rapid antigen testing as an alternative. Deliberately non-compliant students began losing access to UR Courses on October 25, and the small number of deliberately non-compliant employees – all of whom received several warnings – were sent home on administrative leave without pay.

These measures allowed the University to continue operating without monitored access points, with computer labs open and increased access to the library, and with limited food services available. This enabled an increased presence of people on campus for Fall 2021.

These measures will continue in Winter 2022 as the number of students taking in-person coursework dramatically increases. If they have not yet done so for the current term, all students, faculty, and staff must submit a proof of vaccination declaration for the coming term in the UR Self Service portal by December 1. Those who are not vaccinated will be required to pay for their own regular rapid antigen testing. Deliberately non-compliant students who have in-person coursework will be removed from UR Courses, and deliberately non-compliant faculty and staff will be placed on administrative leave without pay. The overall compliance rate is currently more than 99 percent, and we expect a high compliance rate for the start of the Winter 2022 term.

With the campus population being overwhelmingly fully vaccinated, and with mandatory masking in effect, physical distancing in the classroom will no longer be required for Winter 2022, except for in a few high-capacity lecture theatres.

With these measures in place, for Winter 2022 the University is offering 70 percent of courses in person, with approximately 17 percent remote, and the remainder a combination of experiential-based, thesis, and capstone options. This is a more normal, healthy mix of course modalities than past terms, and one that should encourage higher registration rates for future terms.

It is also of note that on the faculty and staff side, the University is finalizing and will start implementing in early 2022 – after assessing more normal operations – the modalities and scope of more permanent remote work arrangements. These arrangements will be governed by clear and transparent principles and procedures that will take into account flexible work hours due to the fact that some jobs do not make remote work a possibility.

Resume public events on campus: With COVID-19 protocols in place for holding events on campus, athletics and theatrical events resumed during Fall 2021, as did access to recreation services such as the pool and the Fitness and Lifestyle Centre. Proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test within the past 48 hours is being applied for all ticketed events such as athletic competitions. Traditional in-person events that resumed with limited capacity included Convocation (the first in-person ceremony held in two years) and the Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards.

For Winter 2022, the Academic Incremental Restoration working group is currently finalizing a set of activity guidelines to govern the increased number of in-person events that are expected in the term. It is of note that the University will help host the Saskatchewan Winter Games in February 2022 – further evidence that regular activities are returning to campus.

Make a full return to research: The University's research enterprise entered “Phase 4 – Green” of the Return to Research plan effective July 12. Under Phase 4, most restrictions were removed and management of COVID-19 research-related risks was decentralized to the Faculty level. This continued through the fall and is expected to be in place throughout Winter 2022 and beyond.

Refine existing international undergraduate and graduate recruitment, enrolment, and student success strategies, while developing new ones as appropriate: Efforts to enhance these strategies for both international and domestic students for future terms are well underway:

- UR International is diversifying its efforts to recruit students from different regions, including Student Direct Stream countries;
- Financial incentives have been implemented for international agents who produce successful applicants;
- Approval was given to hire additional international recruiters;
- A measure has been passed to reduce on-site residency requirements to a minimum of 25%, which will provide more possibilities for remote delivery of coursework to those beyond the University's immediate geographic area, and even outside the country;
- Work continues on the Student Relations Management System, which will make the application and enrolment process more efficient;
- Flexibility is being introduced in the application process for international students who were unable to obtain visas due to COVID, or who must register on a provisional basis with unofficial transcripts;
- Several articulation agreements with international institutions are in development to create more targeted and sustainable international student cohorts;
- Current projections indicate that through these and other efforts, UR International is on track to meet its 10 percent year-over-year increase in the number of new international undergraduate students;
- For domestic undergraduate students, a reduced application fee and an intensified marketing campaign are being launched. This has included an Early Admission Days event that generated over 100 applications more than the one held at the same time last year. Enrolment Services is also working with a hybrid recruitment model that combines virtual events with in-person career fairs and high school visits;
- Housing Services is examining short-term incentives for students to live in residence. The unit is also creating additional residence living-learning communities as part of an enhanced first-year residence experience program, and exploring ways to improve food choices for the University's increasingly diverse student body;
- Full-year registration – which has a positive impact on student planning, retention, and time to graduation – is moving through the approval process;
- The Accommodations Test Centre is scheduled to open in January to better serve students who require examination alternatives due to a disability;
- Plans are underway to create an Office of Experiential Education, in which options such as service learning, Co-op placements, and internships will be managed in one area, and interwoven into all parts of the institution. Such an office would also lead on creating a Co-

Curricular Record, which is an official university attestation of experiential-based education and volunteer activity;

- The University is working with the provincial Ministry of Education as well as Regional Colleges, District Curriculum Managers, and individual high schools to enhance dual credit options, which would see a select number of introductory University of Regina courses offered that count toward both a high school diploma and university credit;
- The Retention Advisory Committee met twice during the term and has developed recommendations to prioritize and implement retention action plans previously prepared with the assistance of Ruffalo Noel Levitz;
- A proposal has been submitted to the provincial government for special funding related to enhancing the first-year student experience;
- The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) has worked with Housing Services to develop a proposal that would create dedicated housing for graduate students;
- Recognizing that excellent graduate supervision is critical to graduate student success, FGSR has partnered with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to participate in the Quality Graduate Supervision (QGS) MOOC at the University of Calgary. This online course has been designed to offer flexible and accessible faculty development for new and experienced graduate supervisors; and
- FGSR launched the #URGradExperience to provide a unique and enriching experience for all graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. The #URGradExperience fosters the acquisition of disciplinary expertise and professional excellence through an array of inclusive programming, professional skill development, experiential opportunities, and global engagement.

Ensure that proposals for revenue generation and finding efficiencies are submitted, carefully considered, adjusted and approved as appropriate, and developed to include detailed business plans:

The Senior Leadership Team developed Board-approved criteria and timelines for the use of the one-time funding provided by the provincial government. Approximately 30 proposals – complete with revenue targets and linkages where possible to the Provincial Plan for Growth – have thus far been considered and are in various stages of the approvals and implementation process. Going forward, others will be considered at intervals of approximately six weeks as they are submitted. Further details are provided in an Information Item included as part of the Board material.

Finalize the priorities and launch the “quiet phase” (Phase 1) of a multi-year Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign that will support the University’s operations in multiple areas: As a result of internal discussions and those involving Government and the community-at-large, Campaign Counsel has recommended that the University take some time to reset its vision and associated priorities for the proposed capital campaign. While the original comprehensive campaign’s primary pillar has some key donor support, additional consultations are required both internally and externally to ensure that it has a more comprehensive vision that will propel the University forward as a whole. Such a vision will be imperative to gain further internal as well as public and private support prior to engaging in additional campaign planning.

It is expected that these additional consultations and subsequent refinements will allow the campaign to be reset in the spring of 2022.

Objective 2: Advance Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenization, and decolonization at the University

The Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement) is undertaking work on several fronts to further Indigenize and decolonize the University. She has begun compiling an inventory of existing Indigenization initiatives – both academic and more generally operational. When completed in coming months, this inventory will inform the consultative development of an Indigenous Strategic Plan that will both enhance existing initiatives and facilitate the creation of new ones to address identified gaps.

As that longer-term process takes place, the University is implementing some more immediate measures. For example, the institution will now recognize continental mobility rights enshrined in the 1794 Jay Treaty by offering domestic tuition rates to all Native American peoples in the United States should they choose to enroll at the University.

In addition, an Indigenous Faculty Steering Committee is being created to develop a respectful, transparent, and professional system of verifying Indigenous citizenship while honouring Indigenous identity, experiences, and understanding of kinship. Without compromising legislative requirements, the steering committee will develop policies and processes for vetting claims to Indigeneity in recruitment and hiring practices. This policy development and subsequent review processes will be in accordance with: the criteria outlined by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People; the principles of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion as outlined in Canada's Tri-Agency Dimensions Charter (2019); the Principles of Reconciliation outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action; and the the principles of academic integrity and ethical conduct contained within the University's own institutional policies.

The development of an Indigenous Procurement policy was delayed by other urgent matters that took priority in recent months. Work on the policy will continue into the new year.

Objective 3: Implement a consultation process with the Board, University Executive Team, Senior Leadership Team, faculty, staff, students, and the wider community regarding the University's identity and reputation

A great deal of work is taking place in several areas related to the University's identity and reputation.

Institutional identity: Recognizing that the University must more clearly define itself to better to draw in students and enhance its reputation, I have ensured that identity has been a topic of discussion in my meetings with external stakeholders such as government, educational, and business leaders. Internally, I have discussed the concept with the Board, the overall University community at town halls, Executive of Council, Senate, donors, alumni, and the University Executive Team. In addition, identity was one of the main topics at the Senior Leadership Team retreat, out of which a general action plan was developed to enhance our identity and reputation.

Based on those discussions and the plan developed at the Senior Leadership Team retreat, a working group has been created to consult widely and define a University of Regina identity that speaks not only to who we are as an institution – our unique strengths – but also to who we want to be in the future. Co-chaired by the Associate Vice-President (University Advancement & Communications) and the Dean of Science, the working group consists of members of the Senior Leadership Team who represent Faculties and administrative units across campus.

The working group will complete its work in three phases by early 2022. The first “research” phase – in which data has been collected and is being reviewed to inform the working group’s activities – is nearly complete. The second, “identity building” phase is underway, and will include analyzing options for institutional identity, conducting focus groups, and developing the different components of an identity. The third “launch” phase will begin in the spring, with the goal of officially unveiling the identity as part of the annual “State of the University Address” in March.

Monitor and enhance performance in national rankings:

In recent months and in a variety of forums – including the Senior Leadership Team retreat as well as Deans’ Council, town hall, and departmental/unit meetings – I have discussed and sought input on the University’s declining performance in *Maclean’s* and other institutional rankings. The consensus from those discussions – consensus with which I am in full agreement – is that the University’s reputation and rankings are not accurate reflections of the high-quality teaching, research, community engagement, student support, and overall educational environment that exist here.

But perception can often be reality in the eyes of the public, and in particular, in the eyes of prospective students and their families. For that reason, I have asked the Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic) to establish a cross-campus working group to address how we can take concrete action in key areas to improve our external reputation, and as an extension of this, our rankings.

That working group has begun examining areas where the University can make a difference in its reputation and rankings both in the short and longer terms. The group expects to generate a series of recommendations in early 2022 that will be distributed to Faculties and units to consider for implementation as appropriate.

I recognize that this is not a “quick fix,” and that the University cannot base all of its programming decisions on rankings that are subjective at best. But I sincerely believe that over the long term and regardless of rankings, the institution will be better for these particular efforts.

Launch Phase 1 of the website re-design and develop a strategy to capture and use enhance analytics to inform marketing and recruitment decisions: The website re-design project is well-advanced, with Phase 1 of its implementation to be completed as planned on December 23. This includes the launch of the University homepage as well as the completion of approximately 200 academic program pages and key landing pages for recruitment, admissions, and enrolment content. Pages focused on campus life and research will also go live at that time.

The advanced Google analytics package will be implemented in the new year following the launch of Phase 1. This will allow the web team to track visitors’ use of the site and easily identify areas that are effective, or conversely, are less effective and require change. Metrics and reporting mechanisms will be determined and monitored in coming months.

Phase 2 will begin in January. It will include completion of the remaining pages of the website, including Faculty landing pages. The result will be a University website that is mobile-friendly, accessible to those with varying abilities, translated into dozens of languages, search-engine optimized, and intuitive in its navigation to create a positive user experience for prospective students.

Objective 4: Enhance the University's efforts toward environmental sustainability and climate action

A considerable amount of work has taken place toward this objective during the reporting period.

Complete and launch the Sustainability Action Plan:

The existing draft of the Sustainability Action plan is the subject of an additional round of consultations to ensure appropriate Indigenous and EDI input. Once revised, it is anticipated to be launched early in the new year.

Create an Office of Sustainability: A proposal has been completed for this office that would oversee sustainability-related initiatives University-wide. A decision on its approval, composition, and funding is expected in December.

Participate in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings:

The Office of Institutional Research has co-ordinated and completed this work, with sustainability-related information on the University's operations and research submitted to the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. The University's subsequent rankings will provide a great deal of information related to how our sustainability efforts compare with those of other universities, and will provide benchmarks on which we can improve in coming years.

Facilities Management activities: Facilities Management continued its work to enhance the overall sustainability of the University's operations. The unit submitted a proposal to use one-time funding from the Province to create an Energy Manager position that would target energy savings, reduce operating costs, and minimize future capital renewal expenses. With the help of a consultant, it is also undertaking a Technical Pathways Study, which when complete by August 2022, will provide recommendations on how the institution can achieve a 25 percent reduction in utility electricity, heating/cooling/ and water consumption by 2025. In addition, Facilities Management is exploring options to install a solar photovoltaic system that would offset GHG emissions to help meet the university's 25 percent reduction target.

Objective 5: Create and grow a research innovation eco-system and entrepreneurial strategy that will help position the University as the leading entrepreneurial post-secondary institution in western Canada

Work toward this objective took place in several areas.

Create a commercialization and technology transfer unit: The establishment of this unit is underway, and is moving through the necessary governance and decision processes.

Create a centre for entrepreneurship and graduate development: The Faculty of Graduate Study and Research is developing the Graduate Advanced Training and Entrepreneurship (GATE) Centre. The centre will help meet student demand for professional and entrepreneurial training, and position the University to be a leader in graduate student career preparation and social innovation training. In doing so, it will support the University's efforts build an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem that will nurture future talent and build a start-up, entrepreneurial culture within the region and the province to support Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.

Partner with provincial incubators to help graduate students commercialize their research: The Dean of FGSR is on the Advisory Board of the Co.Labs tech incubator to provide more opportunities for graduate students. The Faculty is also in discussion with the Foresight Cleantech Accelerator Centre to deliver an accelerated entrepreneurship/training program in winter 2022.

Develop programming to help graduate students refine essential research skills: FGSR has developed the integrated Graduate Professional Skills (iGPS) program to connect graduate students and post-doctoral fellows to an array of professional skill development opportunities.

Objective 6: Advance Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on our campuses

Pauline Streete, who formerly served as Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Officer for Research, is now Senior Advisor to the President (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – Anti-Oppression). Under her leadership in this new capacity, several University-wide initiatives are underway to advance EDI.

Create an EDI and Anti-Racism Committee: Membership has been finalized for a BIPOC-led and majority membership committee designed to advance recommendations and produce reports on the University's progress toward systemic institutional change. Entitled the University of Regina – Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Committee (UR-EDI-AO), the committee held its first meeting in late October. Per its Terms of Reference, UR-EDI-AO will be the University's main discussion and advisory body on equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression, including racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, and religious discrimination.

Partner with URSU to co-fund a position to advocate for BIPOC students: Discussions are underway with URSU regarding the possibility of creating and co-funding the position.

Other EDI-related activities: During the reporting period, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research continued to engage with BIPOC graduate students through the Diversity Graduate Student Group. This included an in-person meeting in October. In addition, in early November I joined other post-secondary presidents across Canada in signing the *Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education*. By endorsing the Charter, the University has committed to redressing wherever possible the historical and current barriers to BIPOC inclusion and representation at our institution, and more generally, in Canada's post-secondary sector.