

November 23, 2021 – February 22, 2022

The following report provides:

- A general overview of my engagement with the University and wider communities during the reporting period;
- An update on my academic research program;
- An update on potential initiatives arising from the Senior Leadership Team retreat; and
- 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 March 8 meeting or as follow-up.

Engagement with the University community:

Engaging with members of the University community remained a priority. Activities in this regard included:

- Continuing meetings with various Faculty councils, departments, non-academic units, and research institutes. This included speaking with representatives from the Saskatoon campus about their space needs;
- Regular meetings with the heads of the Federated Colleges as well as URFA and CUPE leadership;
- Monthly University-wide town hall sessions with faculty and staff to discuss pandemic response, budget, and the recently released alternate work arrangements pilot project;
- One-on-one meetings with all Deans, Directors, and my direct reports;
- Chairing regular meetings of the University Leadership Team and the University Executive Team (as well as the "University Executive Team Plus" group devoted to COVID-19 planning). These meetings have included intensive budget discussions focused on issues such as the pandemic-related effects of declines in enrolment and ancillary revenues;
- Engaging in discussions related to the University's allocation of \$11 million in MOU funding from the Government of Saskatchewan related to revenue generation and cost-saving initiatives. To date, approximately half of the funding has been allocated to more than 20 initiatives;
- Chairing regular meetings of Executive of Council and the Search Advisory Committee for the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). In early February I also participated in my second official meeting of University Senate;
- Speaking at an orientation session for new employees;
- Monthly meetings with the University of Regina Alumni Association Board in my newly created role as *ex officio* Board member. I also met with several donors, prospective donors, and engaged recent alumni;
- Regular meetings with University of Regina Students' Union leadership;
- Attending a meeting of representatives from all student societies;
- Participating in a dialogue session for graduate students;

- Planning a series of five themed focus group sessions for students to learn where the University can enhance supports for students; and
- Providing greetings at a number of University events.

Engagement with the wider community:

During the reporting period, my work to build and enhance relationships beyond the University itself included but was not limited to:

- Meeting regularly with the Mayor of Regina and finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding that will enhance the University and the City's cooperation in key areas of mutual benefit such as cross-promotion, research, and bid/grant applications;
- Planning my initial "State of the University Address" to be hosted by the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce on March 16;
- Meeting with leadership in the Good Spirit School Division, which includes Yorkton, Melville, and Esterhazy. Those meetings included discussions of dual credit opportunities for high school students;
- Holding discussions with federal and provincial government members, including cabinet ministers;
- Speaking with Crown corporations and research institutes about the University's potential to assist with energy transition in several southern Saskatchewan communities;
- Meeting with community organizations including the John Howard Society, Food Bank, and the YWCA to discuss service learning opportunities for students;
- Meeting regularly via Zoom with the Presidents of the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Polytechnic;
- Meeting via Zoom with representatives from some of the Regional Colleges to discuss possible enhancements to our partnerships. I also had an initial Zoom meeting with the Presidents of the University of North Dakota and Montana, and participated remotely in Universities Canada meetings with other Canadian university presidents;
- In conjunction with municipal officials, discussing a possible provincial architecture program with the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Polytechnic in an effort to cost-effectively pool resources for maximum impact in the province;
- Meeting with Fransaskois leaders to discuss ways to attract students who wish to study at least partly in French. This included travelling to Gravelbourg to visit Collège Mathieu;
- Travelling to Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, and North Battleford to meet with educational and community leaders to discuss areas of mutual interest;
- Planning a series of "U of R Days" and public lectures to be held in different communities beginning this spring;
- Meeting with those heading the American and British Consulates based out of Calgary;
- Engaging with representatives from educational institutions in Japan, Finland, Mexico, and the Philippines, among others; and
- Conducting media interviews on a variety of subjects.

My academic research program:

One of my continuing research projects is producing a history of Memorial University's Grenfell Campus, to be completed in time for that institution's 50th anniversary in 2025. With the primary research complete, I worked with Supply Management Services to develop and issue a request for proposals for a

development editor to help me get the manuscript into final publishable form. A development editor has now been engaged (to be paid from my research fund over the next two years) and I have met with him to discuss our collaboration on the project.

Also, at the invitation of a professor, in late January I presented to an upper-level history class on my approach to writing history.

Initiatives arising from the Senior Leadership retreat:

As noted in the previous report, at its August retreat the Senior Leadership Team retreat focused on key areas that have the potential to enhance our teaching and research, overall educational environment, reputation, and student satisfaction. Ultimately, five working groups produced concise action plans complete with recommendations for initiatives they are exploring. What follows is a brief summary of those plans, which will be presented to Deans' Council for further discussion. Please note that some of these initiatives are in fact already underway, and are mentioned in subsequent sections of this report:

- **International and Domestic Recruitment and Retention** – Recruitment and admissions activities underway or being explored include: full-year registration; expediting the application process; requiring a tuition deposit for international students; diversifying source recruitment countries and regions; optimizing the potential of online academic programming and joint degrees for international students; and reviewing and renewing international student and faculty mobility agreements. Retention activities underway include: implementing an integrated first-year student support model; curriculum streamlining to identify and remove barriers to students' progress in their programs; creating a Centre of Experiential and Service Learning that offers co-curricular recognition; and incentivizing excellence in graduate thesis supervision and mentorship.
- **Building an Institutional Identity** – Data collection and review have been completed to determine the general qualities that would characterize an identity. A number of possible identities have been created and are undergoing preliminary review and ranking. Stakeholder consultations and focus group sessions will take place shortly, after which final decisions will be made, and the identity formally launched.
- **Advancing Decolonization and Truth and Reconciliation** – Proposed activities include: developing a more fulsome Elders program; expanding opportunities for Indigenous mentorship and leadership development; creating a task force to address the unique experiences and goals of Indigenous faculty members; developing a decolonized faculty tenure process; initiating a cluster hire across Faculties; integrating mandatory program-level learning outcomes across curriculum related to Indigenous systems of knowledge and contributions; and offering professional development on colonialism and decolonization.
- **Advancing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Oppression** – Activities either underway or being explored include: creating an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression (EDI-AO) committee; developing an EDI-AO strategy and action plan; developing a comprehensive EDI-AO training program to engage faculty and staff in advancing EDI-AO goals; creating a network of internal and external EDI-AO alliances; and developing a staff complement (for example, an AVP (EDI-AO) position or an office of EDI-AO).
- **Enhancing Tri-Agency Research Success** – Initiatives underway or being explored in this area include: developing new high-demand research-based graduate student programs; optimizing allocation of graduate scholarship base funding for thesis-based students; developing programming both for early-career researchers and for mid-career researchers not currently applying for Tri-Agency funding; identifying best practices for incentivizing faculty and Deans to

increase Tri-Agency activity; and placing an Indigenous Research Facilitator in the Office of the Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement).

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

Return to a majority of in-person coursework: Given the enrolment and revenue challenges engendered by the University's decision in Spring 2021 to take a cautious, primarily remote approach to coursework for Fall 2021, it was important to dramatically increase the number of in-person course offerings and other activities for Winter 2022. The emergence of the Omicron COVID-19 variant in late 2021 altered those plans considerably, however.

The initial plan was for the Winter 2022 term to begin with approximately 70 percent of coursework taking place in person – a return to a near-normal mix of in-person and remote instruction. By mid-December, a great deal of work had been done across campus to prepare for this return. This included activities such as scheduling all in-person courses and exams, ensuring that appropriate proof of vaccination/testing protocols were in place, and holding clinics to ensure everyone on campus who wanted to receive vaccinations and boosters could get them.

By mid-December, however, the rapid spread of the Omicron variant in the province necessitated a change in plans. After careful consideration, the decision was made and announced on December 21 that Winter 2022 coursework would begin on January 10 rather than January 5, and would remain entirely remote until at least January 22. This approach was in alignment with other universities both in the province and beyond, as well as many other public agencies.

Ultimately, the start of in-person coursework was further delayed until February 7, with instructors and Deans having the opportunity to collegially determine by January 24 how they would proceed with individual courses. The date to drop a class without penalty was extended to January 31 to allow students the opportunity to opt out of in-person coursework if they wished.

At the time of writing, there are just over 400 classes, labs, and other in-person teaching and learning formats taking place for about 5,000 students, bringing an average of 1,800 students to campus each day. By the time of the Board meeting, effective March 1 all previously planned in-person coursework will have resumed to safely and confidently provide as much of the in-person experience as possible for the students who signed up for it.

In the context of the provincial government's February 8 announcement of the forthcoming removal of public health requirements related to vaccination and masking, the University on February 10 announced that it will maintain masking for the time being, and retain proof of vaccination requirements until April 11 for registered students, faculty and staff.

The primary change from past practice is that paid external testing formerly required for those who have not provided a vaccination declaration will be replaced by required rapid antigen testing, which is freely available on campus and in the community. All on campus are will be strongly encouraged to do regular rapid antigen self-testing regardless of vaccination status, including those taking in-person final examinations.

Effective May 1, the University will be back to pre-pandemic academic operations, with no masking, distancing, or vaccination-related restrictions in place. On that basis, extensive planning continues for Spring/Summer and Fall 2022 - terms in which the University will offer an appropriate mix of in-person and remote coursework with an eye to restoring enrolments to pre-pandemic levels. This is increasingly important, as the most recent numbers indicate that Winter 2022 overall enrolments and credit hours taught are down 7.3 percent and 8.8 percent respectively compared to Winter 2021.

Resume public events on campus: Fall 2021 saw a limited return to on-campus public activities such as theatrical events, varsity sports, and recreation services such as intramurals. Stringent COVID-19 protocols remained in place, including masking, proof of vaccination/negative test results for ticketed events, and limited capacity.

Activity guidelines were developed for Winter 2022 with more in-person activity expected to take place, but as in-person coursework was delayed in January due to the Omicron variant, the University temporarily suspended public on-campus lectures and performances. Varsity sports practices and competitions continued, but without spectators in attendance. Athletic competitions opened to the public again on January 26th with capacity limits of 350 in our large gymnasium. On February 10th, capacity limits were increased to 50% capacity, or approximately 1500 spectators.

Coincident with the March 1, 2022 full return to in-person classes, additional in-person public activities and events are also slated to return, with masking required for the remainder of the term, but proof of vaccination/negative test results not required for those visiting campus. As the circumstances of the pandemic permit, the volume of public in-person activities will increase to near-pre-pandemic levels by Fall 2022.

Make a full return to research: The University's research enterprise remained in "Phase 4 – Green" of the Return to Research plan. As noted in the December report, this means that most restrictions have been removed and management of COVID-19 research-related risks have been decentralized to the Faculty level.

Refine existing international and domestic undergraduate and graduate recruitment, enrolment, and student success strategies, while developing new ones as appropriate: A great deal of work took place in a wide variety of areas related to this measurable.

A major focus for use of the one-time provincial MOU funding is enhancing recruitment, retention, and different aspects of the student experience to help maintain and grow enrolments for the future. More than half of the approximately 20 initiatives approved thus far are related to this, and are in differing stages of development. They are:

- The creation of two Global Student Recruiter positions;
- The extension of the UR International Welcome Solidarity Award for international students beginning their studies in Winter 2022;
- The creation of an Agent Commission Incentive program for recruitment agents working in identified international markets including Student Direct Stream countries;
- Hiring two Regional Recruitment Officers – one based out of Prince Albert to serve the northern part of the province (where we have long known that our presence and recruitment are not as strong as they should be), and one based out of Regina to serve the southern region. Both will provide additional opportunities to recruit Indigenous students;

- Developing a UR Priority First-Year Housing Program to enhance the experience of students staying in residence during their inaugural year at university;
- Developing a Transfer Pathways Action Plan to streamline processes and remove barriers for students wishing to transfer to the University;
- Hiring an Articulation Officer to work with new institutional partners to facilitate student transfers to the University through articulated agreements;
- Developing a first-year/course instructor program to enhance instruction in “gateway” first-year courses;
- Hiring an Indigenous Educational Developer in the Centre for Teaching and Learning to provide teaching and learning supports for Indigenous learners;
- Purchasing and implementing a new non-credit registration system in the Centre for Continuing Education to simplify registration for students and make it easier for them to move between non-credit and credit offerings;
- Redeveloping the Master of Social Work into a flexible delivery modality to better serve students from rural, northern, and out-of-province communities; and
- Developing a Master of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership degree in the Faculty of Education.

The University welcomed more than 300 new international students for Winter 2022 – approximately 100 more than projected – which is a credit to the work of UR International. The unit undertook a wide variety of recruitment and retention initiatives during the reporting period, which included:

- Delivering a short-term customized English-language program for students from a Mexican partner university, and developing one to be delivered in March for students from a Chinese institution;
- Collaborating with the Faculties to create and use new recruitment marketing material;
- Working to engage recruitment agents from Latin America;
- Increasing recruitment activities in target markets, which has resulted in more undergraduate enrolments from Tanzania, Pakistan, and Nepal;
- Participating in dozens of agent training sessions and virtual and in-person recruitment events;
- Being the first Canadian University selected to host the International Mobility Summer Camp, to take place in Summer 2022;
- Launching the Global Skills Opportunity Program, a \$1 million scholarship program jointly funded by the University and the Government of Canada to provide domestic students with study abroad experience. The program focuses on Indigenous students, as well as students with disabilities or from low-income backgrounds;
- Working with the Government of Saskatchewan to explore and in some cases finalize partnerships with institutions in countries such as Japan, Mongolia, and Vietnam; and
- Meeting with Consuls-General to explore collaborations with institutions in several countries.

Likewise, the different areas within Student Affairs deserve credit for their many recruitment and retention activities. For example:

- Enrolment Services has participated in many events to increase the number of applicants to the University. These have included an adult learner event with the Faculties and the Centre for Continuing Education, early admission days for high school students, in-person and virtual school visits, and information nights;
- Initiatives being planned for coming months include a parents night, campus tours, an in-person open house, and promotional activities in communities and schools in conjunction with University Advancement & Communications;

- Various application-to-registration conversion activities are underway or being planned, such as a phone campaign to accepted students, a “missing documents” phone campaign, and in-person and virtual course registration days. Scholarship workshops will also be held virtually and in high schools;
- A Steering Committee and various subcommittees continued work toward establishing a Centre of Experiential and Service Learning for Fall 2022. The groups are in the process of proposing experiential designations, beginning to draft badges, and creating a student-led volunteer centre;
- The Accommodations Test Centre (ATC) officially began operations in January, both accepting bookings and hosting examinations for students who require accommodations. The ATC has been in development for several years as a means of better serving our students;
- Counselling Services provided more than 1,200 appointments from October through January for students seeking assistance;
- Co-operative Education & Internships facilitated a record 280 placements for the Winter term to provide experiential and monetary support for students; and
- The ta-tawâw Student Centre secured \$635,000 in program funding to support Indigenous student success through the Neekaneewak Leadership Initiative and Full Circle Summer Internship Program.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research continued its efforts to enhance recruitment, retention, and the overall graduate student experience. Activities included:

- Holding an online information event for 350 prospective applicants, and an online orientation session for more than 100 new students;
- Partnering with the Centre for Teaching and Learning to offer the Graduate Teaching Enhancement Certificate;
- Completing a review of graduate admission policies and processes to identify and begin addressing potential concerns and barriers facing applicants and staff alike; and
- Enhancing graduate student funding in a number of ways, including increasing funding for Indigenous scholarships and creating new entrance awards for a top student coming out of each undergraduate Faculty.

Some other key recruitment and retention activities taking place across the University are:

- A subcommittee of the High School to University Transition Committee is finalizing a multi-year plan to bring a cohort of Indigenous high school students to the University campus each year to participate in a series of events designed to encourage and facilitate their transition to university;
- Efforts are underway to partner more closely with several school divisions and high schools in the province to expand and deliver the University’s inventory of dual credit courses – something that has been a major component of my outreach to Saskatchewan communities. An MOU in this regard is expected to be finalized shortly with the Regina Public School Division, and agreements with other school divisions will help attract students from across the province in future years;
- Discussions are underway to expand remote delivery of coursework through the Regional Colleges;
- In coming months, I will be joined by a recruiter as I visit classes in several high schools across the province to promote the University. I will invite select Deans and faculty members to participate in these visits;

- The Associate Vice-President (Academic) is working with the Deans to pursue curriculum streamlining that will identify and remove barriers to students' progress in their programs;
- The Provost, Deans, and Registrar are undertaking a detailed assessment of necessary steps to implement full-year registration for September 2023. This would better allow students to plan their academic schedules for the entire year;
- In January, the Centre for Continuing Education launched the fourth of its professional microcredentials – Business Communications. Given that this offering was developed in response to the expressed needs of more than 400 Saskatchewan employers, it is expected to be a popular offering;
- The University is finalizing an MOU with National Advanced Placement & Prior Learning (NAPPL) that will allow us to assess and provide transfer credit for military service. The next step is to develop individual MOUs with local military formations to provide credit to prospective students; and
- By the time of the Board meeting, I will have hosted the first of five scheduled focus group student engagement sessions for this term. They are designed to elicit feedback on where we are doing well, and where and specifically how we can enhance the student experience. Themes to be covered are the Indigenous student experience, the international student experience, teaching and the classroom, student mental health, and the experience of racialized students, those with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQIAP+ community. Actions arising from these sessions – as well as from sessions to be held in coming terms – will be important in helping the University enhance our students' engagement, happiness, and retention at University, which do not rank as highly as we would like in the regular Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) results that may be found [here](#).

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 most recent report on University allocations of the Government of Saskatchewan's multi-year MOU funding was included in material provided to the Board in mid-January prior to submission to the Ministry of Advanced Education. At that time, approximately half of the \$11 million had been allocated to more than 20 different revenue generation and efficiencies projects.

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: Work continued toward a late spring or early summer 2022 reset of the Comprehensive Fundraising Campaign.

Since November, engagement with the campaign counsel has been paused to enable the University to focus on further defining the priorities that will create the parameters of the campaign. Time has been spent on further exploring: the strengths and potential areas of growth for the University; the ways in which these areas also can support the long-term strategies of the City of Regina and the Province of Saskatchewan; the potential for key donor support and engagement; and the ability to attract infrastructure funding either to repurpose existing space or construct a purpose-built facility.

Social and economic impact is an early area of focus and interest for the University, including possible themes around supporting energy transition/sustainability, health and wellness, and a Business school initiative that is also multidisciplinary. A high-level overview of this focus has been drafted and reviewed internally by leadership, with additional thoughts and refinement coming from these meetings. The next step will be engaging key external stakeholders to further gauge interest and support. This process will

provide valuable information on things such as the potential market and partner interest for the campaign focus.

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

A great deal of work continued in this area under the leadership of the Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement).

Take a full inventory of the institution's Indigenization and decolonization initiatives: The Office of Indigenization is compiling information from all departments, units, and Faculties outlining work being done related to Indigenous Engagement. Once this information is compiled by the end of February, it will be organized based on general themes and a formal report will be produced and posted by the end of term on the Indigenous Engagement website.

Develop an Indigenous Strategic Plan to address key gaps: The Strategic Plan will be developed by mid-May based on the aforementioned inventory as well as the priorities identified by the Senior Leadership Team's Decolonization and Truth and Reconciliation working group.

Other Indigenization/decolonization activities: A new structure for the Indigenous Advisory Circle is being implemented, with membership more broadly representative than before from specific Indigenous groups such as First Nations, Métis, and those from both urban and rural settings. This group will work with the Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Engagement) to provide guidance and input on the forthcoming Indigenous Strategic Plan, as well as other key issues related to Indigenous engagement. Membership is being finalized for the Indigenous Faculty Steering Committee that will vet claims to Indigeneity in recruitment and hiring practices. In addition, the Office of Indigenous Engagement has created an email listserv to share information specific to Indigenous employees.

Work continues on a Jay Treaty joint initiative with the University of North Dakota that would recognize continental mobility rights for Indigenous students. Also, a new Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Regina and First Nations University of Canada is in development.

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

Work took place on several fronts to define the University's identity and enhance its reputation.

Institutional identity: As noted in the last report, following the Senior Leadership Retreat a working group was formed to develop a compelling University of Regina identity that speaks both to the institution's strengths and to its aspirations. In defining and creating a clear identity for the University, this group is aiming not only to help students identify with our institution in a more meaningful way, but also to inspire alumni to engage, donors to give, and the community to partner with the institution. In short, the goal is to further raise the University's recognition and appeal.

The group will complete its work in three parts – research, identity building and consultation, and an eventual launch.

The group has completed the research phase by analyzing different internal and market surveys, and examining the identities of other institutions.

The identity building and consultation phase is in progress. Preliminary options for an institutional identity have been created, all of them grounded in the University's location, strengths and values, and ability to distinguish itself in the academic marketplace to create affinity among stakeholders. Both the broad themes identified and the extremely compelling brand/publicity tag lines and accompany text developed will contribute significantly – and positively – in further raising our recognition and appeal.

The launch phase will take place once the components of an institutional identity have been determined and appropriate approvals undertaken. The launch will entail developing a comprehensive communications and marketing plan to introduce the institutional identity and infuse it wherever appropriate into the life of the University. The identity is expected to be launched during the Spring/Summer 2022 term.

Monitor and enhance performance in national rankings: As noted in the last report, the Provost is leading a working group tasked with identifying and addressing ways for the University to enhance its national reputation and rankings. The working group's primary objective is to determine the levers that can have an impact on rankings and then develop recommendations/action plans to positively affect the University's performance.

Members of the group have been identifying areas and strategies for improvement related to: the data provided to the Canadian Association of Business Officers, including student services and library resources; student and faculty awards; student satisfaction survey results; reputational survey results; and research.

The group is scheduled to meet in mid-March to review its findings. In coming months, a set of recommendations will be provided to Faculties and units for their use.

Launch Phase 1 of the website re-design and develop a strategy to capture and use enhance analytics to inform marketing and recruitment decisions: Through a great deal of work by University Advancement and Communications, Information Services, and others from Faculties, departments, and units across the institution, Phase 1 of the website redevelopment project launched as planned on December 23.

That day, the new homepage went live together with approximately 200 refreshed academic program pages as well key landing pages for recruitment, admissions, campus life, and research. The website is now mobile-friendly, accessible to those with varying abilities, translatable into dozens of languages, search-engine optimized, and intuitive in its navigation, creating a positive user experience for prospective students and all other audiences. The launch was supported by a marketing plan that communicated new site features to both internal and external stakeholders, and the revamped website has received positive feedback from many.

The advanced Google analytics package has also been implemented as part of Phase 1 to allow the University Advancement & Communications web team to track visitors' use of the site to identify areas that may require enhancements, and work with Enrolment Services to monitor registration and enrolment data during each academic term.

Phase 2 of the re-design is now underway. This is an iterative process by which all remaining pages of the website, including landing pages for all Faculties and academic departments, will be redone. It is estimated that the entire website will be refreshed over the next 18 to 24 months – a significant achievement when one considers that the website, which was one of the first created in the province approximately three decades ago, is also one of the largest and most complex.

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

Work continued throughout the reporting period on the measurables related to this objective.

Complete and launch the Sustainability Action Plan: Based on extensive consultations with students, faculty, and staff – and through the efforts of various working groups – the President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability (PACS) completed a draft of its Sustainability Action Plan in November. Since then, the plan has been reviewed and augmented from an EDI perspective. A next round of consultation is taking place throughout February to ensure that the plan appropriately includes Indigenous sustainable practices and knowledge. PACS will review the penultimate draft in March 2022, and plans to launch the final plan shortly thereafter.

Create an Office of Sustainability: As noted in the previous report, a proposal was to be considered in December to create this office through the MOU funding provided by the Government of Saskatchewan. It has since been decided that because of its overall importance, the office should be core-funded. The office will proceed on that basis, with a Director to be hired in coming months as a key first step.

Participate in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings: The Office of Institutional Research completed the required data submission in November. The rankings will be released in April 2022, at which time the University will have a benchmark regarding its sustainability commitment and performance compared to other institutions.

Facilities Management activities: Two Facilities Management proposals for provincial MOU funding were approved and will get underway shortly.

The first is hiring an Energy Manager for a three-year term to analyze the University’s utility systems to identify projects that will save energy and operating costs. It is expected that a candidate will be in place in the first quarter and begin work on a Carbon Reduction Technical Pathways Study.

The second is a project to advance the business planning and design of a solar photovoltaic project to the “grant-ready” stage so the University can better leverage federal, provincial, municipal, and other partnerships. The next step is to issue an RFP for a comprehensive business case analysis in the first quarter.

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

A considerable amount of progress was made toward this objective during the reporting period.

Create a commercialization and technology transfer unit: A proposal to create this unit was approved as part of the ongoing process of allocating provincial MOU funding. To move this forward, a Job Evaluation Questionnaire (JEQ) for a Commercialization Officer has been submitted to Human Resources, and the Vice-President and Associate Vice-President (Research) are reviewing the organizational structures for similar units at other universities. Initial meetings have been held with the Research Office and Human Resources to determine if the current Research Office structure can be re-organized to better expand capacity in commercialization and partnerships.

It is of note that the University's recent focus on commercialization opportunities is already showing signs of progress. Two active NSERC "Idea to Innovation" proposals are going forward, marking the first time the University has taken advantage of this program designed to help commercialize a university's intellectual property.

Create a centre for entrepreneurship and graduate development: Development of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research's proposed Graduate Advanced Training and Entrepreneurship (GATE) Centre continues. The GATE Centre is intended to help meet student demand for professional and entrepreneurial training. The proposal was approved by the Council Committee on Research, and after consultations with the Council Committee on Academic Mission, will proceed to Executive of Council for approval.

Partner with provincial incubators to help graduate students commercialize their research: Several graduate students are now participating in an entrepreneurship training pilot program with Foresight Cleantech Accelerator.

Develop programming to help graduate students refine essential research skills: The iGPS program Winter term schedule currently features a diverse array of professional skill development opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Program offerings focus on four areas of professional skill development: Effective Communication, Entrepreneurship and Leadership, Enhanced Teaching and Mentorship, and Wellness and EDI competencies.

Graduate students are also participating in GRST 800, a new non-credit course focused on graduate student success. This revamped course seeks to prepare graduate student for success as they transition to and from graduate school. It includes material on academic integrity, the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations, inclusive values, and essential skills to help students thrive both during and after their university careers.

Other activities related to enhancing research capacity: In response to an external review, enhancements to Research Ethics Board (REB) composition and processes continued. Terms of Reference are being developed for an Indigenous Co-Chair to serve on the REB to support Indigenous researchers. As well, in consultation with faculty researchers the Research Services team developed a new research ethics approval application form that will be launched in September.

A contracts officer has been hired to work with faculty on contract management so they can focus more closely on their research, and streamlining of other internal research processes continues.

A program has been created through the Research Office to provide top-ups to researchers who receive Tri-Agency funding, as long as a minimum threshold of \$50,000 in external support is obtained. A program is also underway to help mid-career faculty members revitalize their research programs.

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

Together with others across the University, the Senior Advisor to the President (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – Anti-Oppression) continued work toward this objective throughout the reporting period.

Create an EDI and Anti-Racism Committee: Membership of the University of Regina – Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Committee (UR-EDI-AO) was formalized and the committee has met twice. It has provided guidance and preliminary input on a draft EDI action plan that is focused on the foundational work required to advance the University’s progress toward systematic institutional change. Once it has considered input from the University Executive Team, the committee will provide additional recommendations for the plan. In doing so, the committee is effectively becoming 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 with URSU have expanded beyond the original idea of co-funding an advocacy position, and now are focused co-funding a variety of anti-racism initiatives that would be administered by URSU for all students. It is expected that an agreement will be finalized shortly.

Other EDI-related activities: The Senior Advisor to the President (EDI-AO) continued consulting with Deans and Directors to request support to advance EDI institutionally, and I attended a Black History Month event hosted by the University Library. It is also of note that the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy has developed a comprehensive EDI strategic plan that may serve as a model for other Faculties and units in months to come as they continue their own work in this important area.