



PROGRESS TOWARDS COMMITMENTS

TECHNOLOGY
PLAN 2021-2022

In 2021-2022, the pandemic transformed how USask learned, taught, researched and worked. As we moved from a mostly remote to a hybrid environment, technology enabled us all to work towards USask’s mission of being the “University the World Needs.”



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Information and
Communications
Technology

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

1 ENHANCE THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

In 2021-22, the pandemic once again changed how students wanted to learn. Desiring safety, but also the opportunity to connect in person, students shifted from **mostly remote** learning to **flexible, hybrid** environments. As the desire for flexibility is expected to continue, we **invested in technology to give all students equal and convenient access to education - regardless of where learning occurs.**

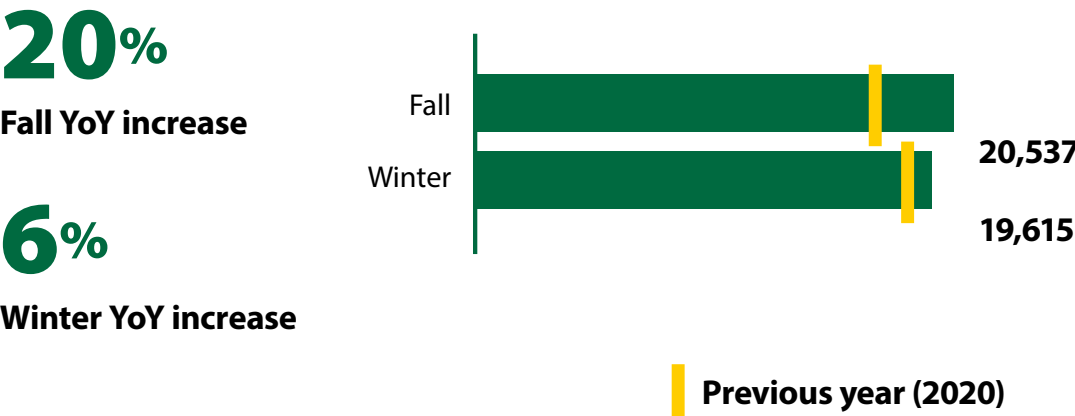
Highlights of how ICT enhanced the student experience over the past year included completing the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) implementation and securing strategic funding to improve Wi-Fi in the classroom.

“According to a 2021 *Educause survey*, students prefer multiple online options, for pedagogical activities ranging from study guides and class/lecture notes, to recorded lectures.”

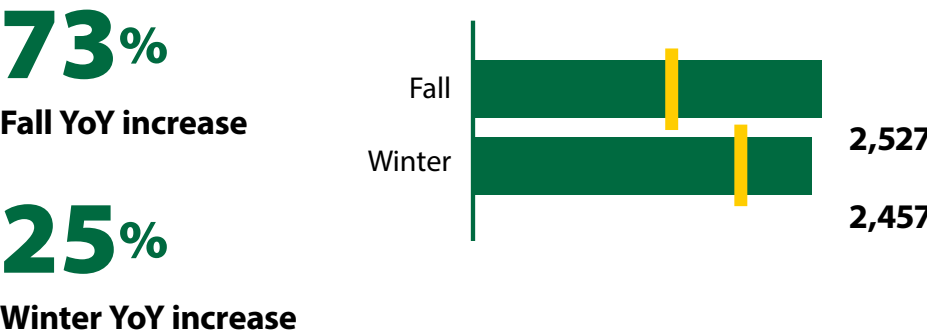
CANVAS LMS STATISTICS

ONLINE TEACHING & LEARNING SUPPORT

Active students in Canvas



Active courses in Canvas



Canvas channel in PAWS

- At USask, Canvas is accessed >90,000 times each week through PAWS

CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

- We have added 125 wireless access points to improve Wi-Fi in 118 classrooms

RECRUITMENT TECHNOLOGY

Our comprehensive Relationship Management System (RMS) improved the university's engagement with prospective students, supporting:

5% INCREASE in processed domestic applications for the past year

7% INCREASE in processing international applications for the past year

PILOT PROJECT with college of A+S to implement automatic decision processing, has resulted in significant time and dollar savings

1484 new applications from email recruiting using the RMS

Indigenous student enrollment support

- Using RMS recruit, we were able to prioritize applications from students who self-identify as Indigenous and needed a quick decision to apply for band funding. We helped over 300 students receive quick responses.
- “So, it was good, it was quick, it’s like okay so I accept the offer, and then no sooner than I accept the offer I have the welcome letter, my student ID, my NSID, my email, I had all that information, right there, so that I’m able to submit that to my sponsor.” – student quote



2 EMPOWER CREATIVE LEARNING

More instructors than ever before are choosing to assess students' knowledge in alternative ways. In a hybrid learning environment, technology is required to support these new ways of teaching. From **providing press books for open book development** to **supporting online international collaborative learning**, ICT empowered creative learning.

Over the past year, we evolved our ecosystem of technologies to enable hybrid, innovative teaching and learning.

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM

- We partnered with the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning and DEU to launch **teaching.usask.ca/learning-technology**. The site provides easy access to the tools the USask community uses to create, deliver, manage and analyze learning content. In 21/22 we added over 30 academic tools.

VIDEO

- Panopto gives instructors and students simple and easy-to-use tools to record, edit, manage and distribute video content.
- 1,136,778 hours of video were viewed by students during asynchronous learning in the past year.

VIRTUAL LABS

- Utilizing Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop, we built a more flexible virtual lab ecosystem that will allow for a better hybrid computer lab environment for the university. This new Remote Computer Lab service was soft-launched early in 2022, with great feedback from instructors and students! **Learn more.**

“Asynchronous learning [is the best use of technology in my course]. I have a backup in case my technology isn't working or accessible during class time. Being able to work on assignments before, after, or during class makes it very accessible for any student.”

“THE EDUCAUSE SURVEY REVEALED THAT “A LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS DISCUSSED HOW REMOTE ACCESS TO SPECIALIZED SOFTWARE (E.G., GIS, SPSS, CAD) REALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LEARNING EXPERIENCES.”

According to Educause, “students sang the praises and benefits of the **recorded lecture** for the flexibility of scheduling that it offered (especially under pandemic conditions) and the ability to review lecture materials whenever, wherever, and for however long they might need. And... recorded lectures are critical to providing students with disabilities online access to needed materials and resources.”

3

ENABLE
RESEARCH
SUCCESS

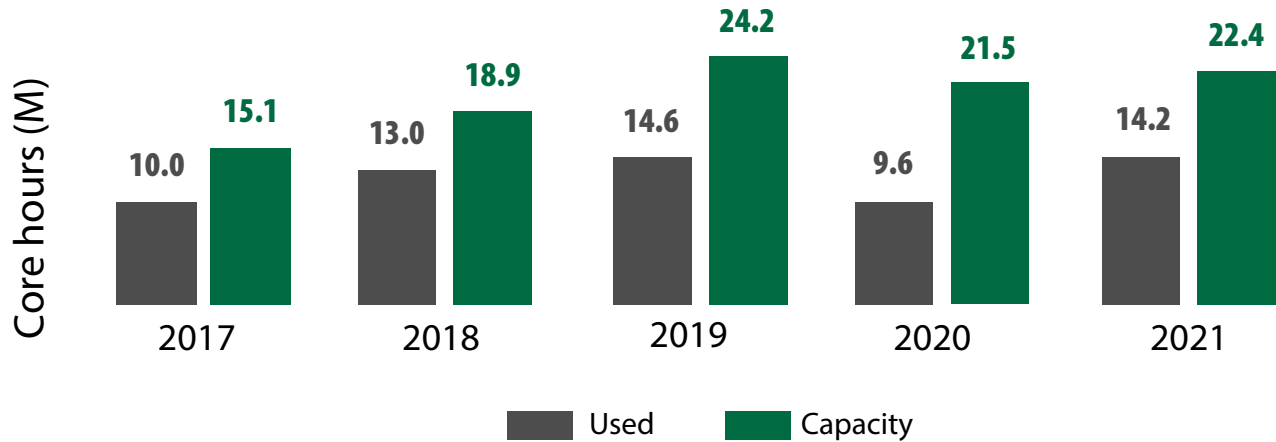
Over the past year, we partnered with the *Global Institute for Food Security* (GIFS) and the *Global Institute for Water Security* (GIWS) to expand our agile and responsive technology infrastructure for research. With the deployment and expansion of Copernicus, we provided high performance storage and supercomputing capacity so researchers could tackle problems bigger than they could on their own. This project also allowed us to expand our storage service for research, *Datastore*, for all researchers on campus. [Learn more](#)

USASK RESEARCH SUPPORT

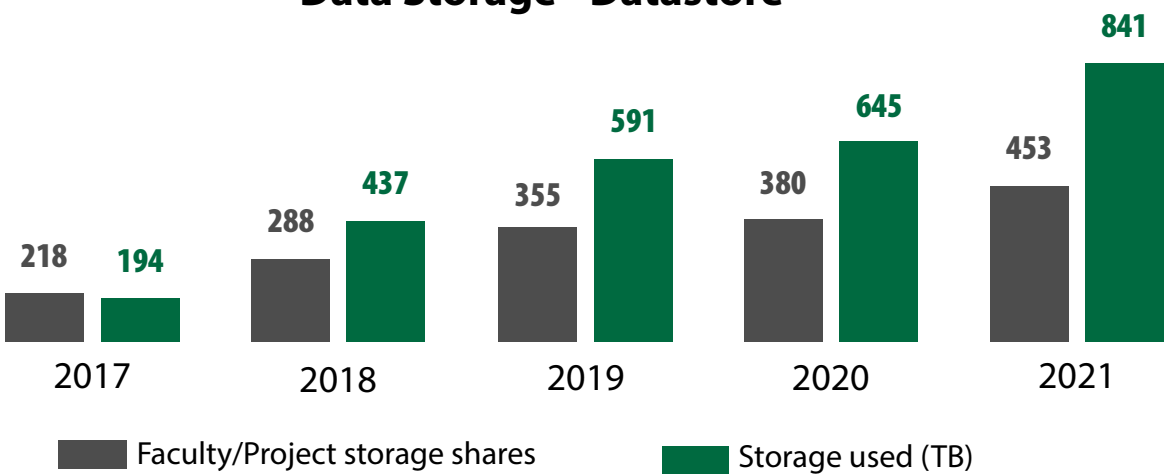
3,679
FACULTY, STAFF, AND
STUDENT RESEARCHERS
ASSISTED

16
SCIENTIFIC APPS
AVAILABLE

7
CFI GRANT
CONSULTATIONS



Data Storage - Datastore



ICT AND PHYSICS RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

Balancing the unique research requirements of the Physics department with the need for IT security, a comprehensive security plan was developed that allowed the research groups to have the freedom to do the work they need to do while still protecting the rest of the campus network. [Learn more](#)



4
SUPPORT
INSTITUTIONAL
EXCELLENCE

COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGIES

To support the university’s needs for boundless collaboration, ICT expanded the technical infrastructure to enable more flexible collaboration opportunities. Over the past year, we completed our transition from WebEx to Zoom; provided more access to collaboration tools in Microsoft Office 365; and improved our hybrid work spaces.

MICROSOFT OFFICE

Teams:

8520
active users

9M
teams chats per year

26M
video call minutes
per year

Added new features
including breakout
rooms and polling

Outlook email:

Receive
~500k
email/day

Send
~60k
emails per day

Microsoft OneDrive:

46
MILLION
files stored

WEB AND VIDEOCONFERENCING:

- ICT consulted >1000 staff, faculty, students and researchers to understand their needs for web and videoconferencing. Zoom is our new technology provider.

“Accessibility is important. . .we need to make sure our events are open to people who require adaptive technologies and access by phone in Indigenous communities who may not have stable internet access.”

- Web and videoconferencing stakeholder

“Ensuring program delivery to rural and remote communities is an important part of my role...the only reliable tool that I have used this last year has been Zoom.”

- Web and videoconferencing stakeholder

ZOOM USAGE STATISTICS

+160K meeting participants
per month

+22K meetings
per month

+10M meeting minutes
per month

HYBRID MEETING ROOM
TECHNOLOGY

40 meeting rooms updated with webcams and microphones to enable hybrid meetings.

TECHNOLOGY TO ENABLE
STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

To “be the university the world needs” senior leaders need tools and data to enable strategic decision making. ICT has been working on data governance as the basis for data informed decision making. In the past year we provided self-service analytics that allow campus leaders to explore the nuance behind the numbers.

ANALYTICS / BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

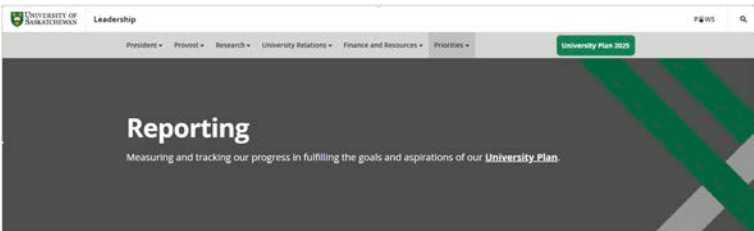
ICT provided Microsoft PowerBI to give decision makers access to rich interactive data visualizations.

“During 2021, the ICT team led the creation of a dashboard that shows where programs are enabling parity in participation, retention, and achievements between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This dashboard will help inform planning of activities by colleges, schools, and support services. The parity dashboard is a systems level tool that is potentially unique nationally.”

- Dr. Airini - Provost and VP Academic

NEW PUBLIC REPORTING SITE:
leadership.usask.ca/priorities/reporting.php

We launched a new public reporting site to provide greater transparency into university activity through the public reporting website.



GOOGLE ANALYTICS AND WEB SUPPORT:

At USask, our virtual front door is always open. And now we understand our 6 million web visitors needs thanks to the cohesive approach to analytics our digital team developed last year. Staff now have data at their fingertips to evolve content in support of institutional priorities.

“As a publicly funded institution, the University of Saskatchewan is committed to accountability, transparency, and accessibility. The release of the public reporting site is an important step towards those commitments by creating a space that provides transparent insight into university activity. I am pleased to see this commitment being realized through a strong collaboration between ICT, UR, IPA, HR, Finance, and the strategic enrollment team, and look forward to seeing more!”

- Peter Stoicheff, USask President

USASK WEBSITE STATS:

43
MILLION
pageviews

6.1
MILLION
total visitors

33,756
student
applications

30,356
shop.usask.ca
purchases

66%
of users from
outside of
Saskatchewan

17,115
job
applications

1,243
online
donations