Despite the challenges of the year, I am proud of the teamwork and leadership demonstrated at all levels within Finances and Resources. Our efforts resulted in the introduction of new technology products, improved shared services and continued pandemic response and recovery support for the university community. This past year, we:

• Played a key role in both participating and leading university pandemic response and recovery efforts at both the senior management and operational levels, partnered with community and government to contribute to pandemic response, and maintained critical operations.
• Provided technology and people supports to ensure USask could maintain operations in a largely remote world.
• Advanced USask’s financial sustainability strategy to improve financial resilience against future challenges and disruptions.
• Continued to advance the implementation of a shared services model through our human resources, finance, facilities, and IT business partners and through enhanced and improved administrative services provided by ConnectionPoint
• Supported VIDO-InterVac’s efforts to combat COVID-19, resulting in federal government funding grants to further develop plans for a vaccine manufacturing facility.
• Assisted with the implementation of major workforce restructuring while maintaining a stable labour relations climate.
• Began planning to enable a successful and coordinated return to campus for our students, faculty, and staff.
• Advanced the implementation of institutional wide equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives that contribute to a university community where all members are represented.
• Installed a new playing surface at Griffiths Stadium to enhance the safety of our athletes and community users.

I have no doubt that the efforts of Finance and Resources to transform over the past several years facilitated the university’s quick transition to a largely remote world. Our dedication to increasing integration, collaboration, and improving and making our customer-focused services more transparent ensured that we met the challenges of the 20-21 fiscal year with agility and responsiveness. Through the strength and determination of our team and leaders and our dedication to the university values and goals, we will continue to strive towards partnering to be the university the world needs.

Greg Fowler
Vice President, Finance and Resource
Our vision is *Partnering to be the university the world needs.*

Our purpose is to lead major administrative areas by providing a high performance, networked team capable of providing the university with enhanced potential, creative solutions and a sustainable future. We bring value by working with our partners in the delivery of solutions, programs and services in our areas of responsibility.

The driving question of the University Plan is “what does the world need from USask?” This question requires support units to consider how their plans will respond to the university’s strategic commitments to enable college plans. What support unit goals will help bring the USask plan to life?

The Finance and Resources Plan 2025 considers how the support unit’s products, services and staff are critical to helping advance the University of Saskatchewan as ‘the university the world needs’ and enabling the university community as a whole to achieve its aspirations. Our vision is “Partnering to be the university the world needs.”

Finance and Resources serves USask in the areas of finance, human resources, IT, procurement, major capital building projects, facilities, consumer services, real estate and land development, as well as holding corporate responsibility for subsidiaries and related entities. The portfolio covers a tremendous range of activities and functions that work together to support the vision and mission of the university in a customer-centric, agile, and cost-effective way.
In 2017 Finance and Resources recognized the need to not only do different things, but to do things differently.

In recent years, several fiscal realities, including resources allocation reductions, employment cost escalations, the depletion of reserves, required facilities and equipment upgrades and most recently COVID-19 have placed substantial fiscal pressure on the unit and the university.

These challenges, along with the university’s response to the pandemic, have highlighted the importance of cross-unit collaboration to achieve our goal of providing exceptional administrative and technical services and ensuring our entire university community, no matter where they may be located, receive consistent, quality and efficient services.

To respond to the rapidly changing needs of the university while addressing the fiscal realities, leaders from all levels in Finance and Resources continue to implement actions that enable our desired transformation. Here are just a few examples.
2 Streamline Structure
Optimize the structure to ensure efficient operations and ‘best and highest use’ of existing resources

Reducing Duplication - To make it easier for our university community to access established vendor agreements prior to making a purchase decision, we launched a USask Marketplace in PAWS. This has introduced the opportunity to reduce the duplication of purchasing effort and costs associated with duplicated purchases.

3 Customer Centricity
Design an organizational structure that drives customer focus/centricity across the portfolio

Focusing on Customer Safety - Our custodial team is one example of many that demonstrates how we focus on the people we serve, work together in partnership with our university community and value change. Changes to the standard cleaning processes were required in order to ensure a safe return to campus, which resulted in a community partnership between USask and Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) to gain the knowledge and implement updated processes to alleviate concerns with returning to a space where COVID-19 may have been present. Read more about this story: Custodial staff key to safety on campus during pandemic - News - University of Saskatchewan (usask.ca)

4 Enable Scalability
Create an organization structure that enables the addition, replacement and/or exclusion of functions to respond to changes in the portfolio focus.

Enabling Stakeholder Success - As our fiscal year ended, we recognized the need to focus on ensuring our technology services and solutions enable the success of all our stakeholders by providing direction and expertise on change management and communication strategies. The new CATS team was formed to work across portfolio boundaries and enable Client and Technology Success.

5 Foster agility and responsiveness
Enhance Finance and Resources ability to adapt to changes in the environment to improve response time.

Improving Support – A number of our support units including ConnectionPoint, IT support and the services portfolio leadership team have adopted regular team huddles which fostered the trust, team connection and collaboration that was instrumental to provide customers with timely responses and solutions for the challenges they were facing.

Administrative Support Continues to Increase - The scalability and agility the shared services model provides enabled colleges and units to focus on maintaining USask operations as well as responding to priorities experienced as a result of the rapidly changing remote work environment. The proportion of key administrative transactions that ConnectionPoint supported in this fiscal year increased substantially compared to past years with HR transactions seeing the largest increase, up 21.49% compared to last year’s increase of 3.02%.

Automated Student Payments – To ensure students received emergency student aid payments, reimbursements, awards, and bursaries in a timely fashion, we collaborated across units to prioritize student direct deposits for more than 2800 students.

Continued Access to Learning Materials - USask Bookstore and Shop USask locations remained open to support the academic endeavors of our students. Pick-up of course materials was offered to allow for student accessibility; online shopping was also provided with free delivery to improve accessibility during the pandemic.
2020-2021 KEY PRIORITIES & RESULTS

PROTECT PEOPLE AND DATA

Pandemic Response and Recovery - Members of our team played leading roles with the university’s Pandemic Response and Recovery Team and Crisis Operations Team. Safety Resources also conducted liaison work with City of Saskatoon officials.

Remote Work Arrangements, Guidelines and Supports – Various Finance and Resources units developed the framework, guidelines and online supports to transition to remote work arrangements and enhance the remote work experience.

Increased On Campus Activity – To support the new safe access to campus process, our team reviewed/approved requests for research, non-research and one-time access to campus.

Effectively Managing Change – We provided change management expertise to support planning, communication and personal change for the return to campus.

Safety Training - To ensure all employees returning to campus were aware of and followed COVID safety standards such as risk, PPE usage, cleaning/disinfection, symptom tracker and exposure control plan for onsite workers, an online training program was created and offered.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND KEY RESULTS

GOAL #1

Create a Safe, Engaging and Welcoming Environment that Inspires Learning and Discovery.

We strive to ensure all who work, learn with or visit USask feel an affinity for our university as demonstrated through embracing diversity, fostering inclusivity, living university values and contributing to safe work and learning physical and virtual environments.

Our goal is enabled through the programs and initiatives we offer and the projects we lead or partner on that CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE at USask for our stakeholders, with a particular focus on students, faculty and staff.

Also, by offering programs and solutions that empower faculty, staff and students to ensure their work and learning environments are safe, engaging and inclusive, together as a USask community we PROTECT PEOPLE AND DATA.
CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE

As part of the Wellness Strategy, we enhanced employee resources and mental health related coverages in benefits plans, increased training and resource awareness efforts, evolved EFAP programming to establish Indigenous supports, and improved discrimination and harassment prevention services.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy, including refreshed definitions to support enhanced reporting, was approved following extensive community consultation.

Supported anti-racism and anti-oppression education delivery to the President’s Executive.

Extensive collaboration with the research community enabled us to develop plans to improve our research data management practices and leverage the benefits at USask.

We designed and delivered a virtual Indigenous student employment readiness program in partnership with student employment and career centre.

Supporting Students - We made it possible for staff to allocate funds from their APEF/DSAE to student crisis and graduate student support.

Changing How Phones are Accessed: Cisco Jabber Softphones were implemented which meant staff with internet access on mobile devices or desktop computers could move across campus or across the world without losing access to their telephones.

PROTECT PEOPLE AND DATA CONTINUED

Safe Access to Services - Processes were automated or moved online to significantly improve the way our students accessed services. Course materials could be ordered online and picked up at Shop USask or free delivery for those who could not come to the store; students living off campus and those in quarantine could order grocery, sundry and ready-made meal kits online with contactless pick up from a new culinary location, House and Quarter.

Centralized Contracting for Stores – Our procurement and campus stores network collaborated to ensure there was an adequate supply of Personal Protective Equipment to support university operations, a successful partnership that made a world-wide supply and distribution issue a non-issue for USask.

Multi-factor Authentication - To protect our university community’s important research and personal data from cybercriminals, we worked to ensure all faculty and staff enabled multi-factor authentication on their mobile devices.
Safe Access to Campus: To facilitate important academic and research initiatives and remote learning in Fall 2020, several groups across Finance and Resources worked together at both the senior management and operational levels to design and implement a process that facilitated the safe access to campus.

Workforce Strategies and Programs – To ensure USask employees were supported through the uncertainties brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic, temporary workforce strategies and programs (e.g. assessing ongoing operations and services against existing workforce, salary and benefits maintenance program, top-up program, temporary layoff and recall program) were developed to assist in informing People Leaders’ decisions on the temporary and permanent makeup of their workforces in response to the immediate and ongoing impacts from the Pandemic.

SHA Vaccine Administration – Our team provided support to prepare Merlis Belsher Place for use as a mass immunization clinic for our Saskatchewan community. This work included, but was not limited to, project management, securing a loan of the university’s ultra-low temperature (-80°C) freezers to facilitate storage of vaccine and IT support.
DELIVER THE BEST STAKEHOLDER VALUE CONTINUED

SHA COVID-19 Testing Call-Backs – An eight person call centre was established by ICT to enable Nursing to assist the SHA.

Enabling COVID-19 Vaccine Development – To ensure VIDO-InterVac could focus on COVID-19 vaccine research, our teams provided critical support including IT security enhancements to protect research against cybercrime; local supercomputing resource priority access to conduct vaccine modeling; financial services to develop the reporting format and mechanism for accountability required to secure funding from Innovation SK and procurement services to expedite contracts for supplies, clinical trials, manufacturing, production, and insurance at a time when unprecedented worldwide demand for these services was occurring.

Attracting More USask Grads: Human resources worked in collaboration with ICT, University Relations and Connection Point to develop a talent acquisition focused marketing plan that targeted people who liked USask’s Facebook Page and helped improve the application process.

Transparency of Services and Fees: Our teams clarified service agreements with collaborative parties; rationalized fees across the portfolio and published an updated and comprehensive Finance and Resources service catalogue that contains 66 services.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Continue to enable self-serve support and standardized processes with over 11200 Connection Point and IT knowledge base support articles created since the beginning of March 2020.

Onboarding Programs were collaboratively developed for six new senior leaders, planning completed for two new Greystone Leadership programs available for Fall 2021 including Greystone Foundations for new people leaders and redesigned the Greystone Leadership for virtual delivery.

Completed planning the career engagement for faculty portion of the Faculty Renewal Project.

Online Teaching & Learning Support - Between April 1 – Sept 1 to enable more effective teaching ICT offered 85 training sessions to 320 faculty, 20 students and 356 staff which included Panopto, Blackboard, WebEx, and Teams.
FINANCES AND RESOURCES

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND KEY RESULTS

SUPPORT THE UNIVERSITY PLAN

Courageous Curiosity

Empowering a daring culture of innovation with the courage to confront humanity’s greatest challenges and opportunities.

UNLEASH DISCOVERY:
VIDO Manufacturing Facility

When the University of Saskatchewan’s Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, (VIDO-InterVac) was granted funding to build a facility to manufacture up to 40 million doses of vaccines annually, our enterprise project management office provided the critical support needed to plan and secure the resources required to build the facility within the expected timelines and budget.

Boundless Collaboration

Invigorate the impact of collaboration and partnership in everything we do.

ALIGN STRUCTURES:
2025 Technology Plan Implementation

With a commitment to Enhance the Student Experience and Empower Creative Learning we fast tracking the implementation of our new Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas. By the Fall 2020, 81% of all active courses in Canvas used discussion boards compared to 25% use in Blackboard in Fall 2019. As of April 2021 - 90% of courses were delivered via Canvas; 20% more than originally expected.

Read more on our shared achievements in the Technology Plan 2025 Report of Progress.

COLLABORATIVE CAPITAL DESIGN

Our new approach of engaging key stakeholders in the functional space planning and optimization as well as human centered design workshops has significantly improved the outcomes of our capital projects.

ENABLING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In partnership with the RDoS and SHA, we created a Memorandum of Understanding to make it administratively easier for the SHA to engage with residents to assist with the vaccination effort.

EMBOLDEN PARTNERSHIPS:
Ditching Desktop Printers Guide
Spotlights USask

The normative messaging ICT developed in collaboration with Office of Sustainability to communicate the importance of and influence the behaviour of faculty and staff to ditch their individual desktop printers in favour of USask multi-function printers was spotlighted by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. View the whole publication.
In alignment with Vision 2057: University Land Use Planning and in partnership with the City of Saskatoon, key partners and stakeholders, the University Sector Plan development was completed and included a robust consultation process – receiving endorsement by the Board of Governors in March and City Council in April.

We envision our vacant endowment lands will become neighbourhoods of the future, house approximately 50,000 people while supporting the financial sustainability of the University of Saskatchewan for many more generations to come. Read more information on the University Sector Plan.

In support of the goal to reduce USask’s greenhouse gas emissions 45% from their 2010 levels by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050, we participated in USask’s transformative plan to outline the services that Finance and Resources provide on big institutional initiatives that will enable this goal. Also, the Optimizing Energy Efficiency (OEE) Project that is underway has already saved $300,000 in annual utility costs and reduced annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2,000 tons according to this recent USask news article.

The Indigenous Procurement Strategy was developed with internal training outlining the university’s commitment to a future where the university’s direct business relationships with Indigenous suppliers are representative of the Indigenous population in Saskatchewan and beyond.

$10K in annual scholarship over a three-year period was secured through a contract negotiation with Fisher Scientific. Also, $1K per year in mechanical engineering scholarships were secured with a BGE Indoor Air Quality Solutions contract.
GOAL #3

Empower All to Support and Sustain the USask Mission for Future Generations

To ensure the University of Saskatchewan is available for future generations of students, faculty, staff and members of our local and global community to learn, discover, create and collaborate for another 114 years and beyond, Finance and Resources sets direction with and for our university community that enables decision-making to sustain the university’s operations in the future.

We ENABLE INSTITUTIONAL STEWARDSHIP by leveraging our expertise we lead the collaborative development of forward-thinking and creative strategies that guide university leaders to make the best use of our resources and assets to sustain university operations in the future.

Also, by focusing on opportunities within the Finance and Resources mandate to IMPLEMENT ALTERNATIVE REVENUE STREAMS that grow university revenues in a mission-consistent way, we help sustain institutional programs and support Finance and Resources operations.

2020-2021 KEY RESULTS

ENABLE INSTITUTIONAL STEWARDSHIP

Advancing USask’s Financial Sustainability Strategy - Significant progress was made by our team in advancing this strategy through planning and coordination, project leadership and execution, change management and communications transparency and government relations outcomes that help ease existing challenges and provide USask with financial resilience against future challenges and disruptions.

Governance for Land Development - We worked with the Board of Governors to determine which land governance model would allow USask to pursue increased development of endowment lands with the greatest likelihood of success.

Mitigate Financial, Operational & Reputational Risk - We successfully negotiated four collective bargaining agreements that resulted in restructuring of ASPA merit pay to one-time bonus, introducing health and dental cost-sharing for exempt employees, and furthering our de-risking strategies of defined benefit pension plans through the newly created Management Investment Committee.
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND KEY RESULTS

ENABLE INSTITUTIONAL STEWARDSHIP CONTINUED

Capital Investment Framework – continued implementation of a methodical and diligent approach to determining how to best invest scarce resources in alignment with academic, research and infrastructure priorities.

Physical Infrastructure Renewal: While continuing to renew our physical infrastructure, a comprehensive condition assessment is in development with the assistance of Government Relations. Expected completion is June 2021 to secure provincial/federal funding for future renewals.

Financial Management: Developed and distributed a financial management policy and procedures manual which provides resources to assist with financial management activities.

Bring Your Own Phone: Implemented a new USask mobile phone program that enabled leaders to reduce costs and provide employees with preferred pricing of Telus mobile phones and plans to support the “Bring Your Own Phone” options.

Projects Enable Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions: According to the 2020 annual report of the Sustainability Revolving Fund, the saving of 2.5 Olympic swimming pools’ worth of water from the urinal replacement project we supported contributed $77,000 to the fund and is helping the university progress towards it’s goals.

IMPLEMENT ALTERNATIVE REVENUE STREAMS

University Sector Plan – worked collaboratively with the City of Saskatoon to create a policy framework for long range planning for neighborhoods and related community facilities, within the context of the City’s Official Community Plan.