

# Message from the Vice-President, University Relations



Much has been said about the increasing importance of research-intensive universities in the economic and social well-being of modern society. We create and exchange knowledge; we drive innovation and spark the entrepreneurial spirit. We help people discover their capabilities and envision their futures. We are at once economic engines and thoughtful contributors to civic debate. We honour the past while we work with and for communities to shape the future.

Such has been the story of the University of Saskatchewan for more than a century. Driven by ideas, this university at its core is defined by its people—a diverse community full of curiosity, drive, vision and commitment.

The University Plan and our mission, vision and values—creativity, sustainability, connectivity, reconciliation and diversity—commit us to align, to uplift, to engage, to partner, to communicate, and to amplify and celebrate our successes, reinforcing who we are and who we must be to become **The University the World Needs**. Achieving this intent will require each of us to undertake purposeful, thoughtful and inspired approaches to our work.

This University Relations strategic plan compels us to do exactly that. It provides our portfolio roadmap to achieving the ambitions, commitments and goals of the university plan. It ties our priorities and initiatives through 2025 directly to the commitments of that plan: commitments to courageous curiosity, boundless

collaboration and inspired communities. It is framed by our University Relations promise to be, at all times, creative, open and true—a promise that grew from the heart of our staff and speaks genuinely to who we are and what we value.

Through the University Relations strategic plan, we will:

- Increase recognition in core areas of excellence
- Develop and execute a strong government relations strategy
- Establish UR as a go-to resource for the campus community
- Build advocacy and support within external communities
- Frame and advance our institutional narratives
- Lead the university in a highly successful comprehensive campaign

It has been gratifying, and humbling, to be a part of this UR team as it has drawn together to formulate these goals. Our ability, willingness and promise to achieve these outcomes will help ensure that the University of Saskatchewan achieves its own vision and mission, that it is guided by its values and that it achieves its intent of becoming **The University the World Needs**.

Dha Pozqa Osbum

Regards,

Debra Pozega Osburn

# Framework

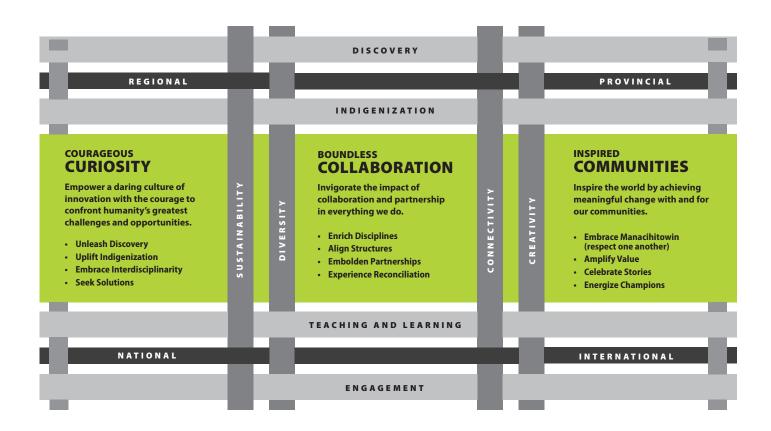
#### **UNIVERSITY PLAN**

#### THE UNIVERSITY THE WORLD NEEDS

Nīkānītān manācihitowinihk Ni manachīhitoonaan

#### **INTENT OF THE UNIVERSITY PLAN:**

Through this plan, the University of Saskatchewan will be the university the world needs.



#### **2025 ASPIRATIONS**

**Transformative Decolonization Leading** 

**to Reconciliation.** Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and communities are holistically strengthening the spirit and methodologies we inhabit.

**Productive Collaboration.** Community, private-sector, and international partnerships animate every facet of our research enterprise.

**Meaningful Impact.** Our knowledge, discoveries, and innovations are helping communities achieve their social, cultural, and economic goals.

**Distinguished Learners.** Our graduates are among the most inventive, collaborative, and sought-after in Canada and around the world.

**Global Recognition.** Our research, graduates, academic programming, and reputation are recognized as world-class.

# University Relations Strategic Goals

Goal 1

Increase recognition in core areas of excellence.

Goal 2

Develop and execute a strong government relations strategy.

Goal 3

Establish University Relations as a go-to resource for the campus community.

Goal 4

Build advocacy and support with our external communities.

Goal 5

Frame and advance our institutional narratives.

Goal 6

Lead the university in a highly successful comprehensive campaign.

Strategic Goal 1 INCREASE RECOGNITION IN CORE AREAS OF EXCELLENCE. **UNIVERSITY RELATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN | 4** 

This goal is directly tied to each of the university's 2025 aspirations. It closely relates to all three of the university's commitment areas, with strong emphasis on courageous curiosity because it forms the basis for success and recognition in research and core areas of excellence.

University Relations will implement objectives and strategic initiatives for the University of Saskatchewan to be consistently recognized among the top universities globally, seen among the top 10 in Canada, and known worldwide for its research and accomplishments in core areas of excellence. Specifically, we will:

- Execute, along with other key units, the recommendations outlined in the Rankings Action Plan, which was created by the Rankings Working Group, in order to lay out the path and provide concrete steps needed to improve in select rankings.
- 2. Complete the development of and launch our new brand platform, which will form the basis of our media and communications strategies.
- 3. Complete the strategy and launch our Regional Presence Plan, which is designed to deepen alumni engagement.
- 4. Develop a strong digital media strategy.

All areas of the university influence, and are affected by, our profile and recognition in our communities both near and far. Effective, focused storytelling is essential to our success in raising profile and awareness. University Relations serves a critical function in both telling the story and raising the profile, and in ensuring others have the essential tools and frameworks to do so—whether those stories are about or told by our students, faculty, staff or alumni.

The foundation of success for this goal is the continued success in teaching, learning, research and scholarly work across the academy. The culture of innovation that characterizes the colleges, institutes and centres provides the substance on which to build recognition. University Relations is committed to working with the colleges and other units on their strategic advancement goals.

Through support, collaboration and partnership with colleagues in all academic colleges, across the vice-presidential portfolios, in Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (TLSE), in Indigenous Engagement, in Institutional Planning and Assessment (IPA), in numerous administrative units and in Huskie Athletics, we will achieve this goal by 2022-2023.



- Our placement in select rankings will go up.
- We will increase our number of contactable alumni.
- We will have stronger relationships with external stakeholders, such as government, alumni, and community partners.
- We will have more stakeholders in the community who will advocate for us.
- We will see an increase in various measures of public perception.
- We will increase our ability to attract top academic talent and leadership.
- We will increase our ability to attract resources, such as tri-council funding, donations and government funding.
- We will see an increase in enrolment in core areas of excellence.

Strategic Goal 2 DEVELOP AND EXECUTE **A STRONG** GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STRATEGY. UNIVERSITY RELATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN | 6

This goal is directly tied to the university's 2025 aspirations of productive collaboration, meaningful impact and global recognition. It aligns with the university's commitment area of boundless collaboration because it relies on the collaborative efforts of the entire campus. A strong government relations strategy will ensure the provincial government views our university as a partner in the economic and social success of our province, and that all orders of government see us as a strong leader and effective partner.

University Relations will implement objectives and strategic initiatives for the University of Saskatchewan to be consistently recognized as advancing the city, the province, Canada and the world, ensuring that all orders of government understand, appreciate and support our priorities. Specifically, we will:

- Recruit and appoint the university's first associate vicepresident, government relations and director, government and stakeholder relations, who will develop, lead and execute a successful institutional strategy.
- Develop highly strategic government-focused communication tools, such as constituency brochures, ministry-specific briefings, presentations, backgrounders and regular correspondence, to demonstrate the local impact of the university in the province and beyond.
- 3. Build strategic structures and processes for lobbying, which are understood and guide engagement with government throughout campus.
- Position the university as a leader, agenda-setter, reliable source and natural partner for both the public and private sector.

All areas of the university are affected by and play a role in successful government relations. University Relations will work collaboratively with all areas in order to build a trusting and mutually beneficial relationship with government.

The foundation of success for this goal is the understanding on the part of each portfolio, college and academic unit of the government relations strategy and their role in, or contribution to, that strategy. The expertise, knowledge and support from University Relations will be at the hub of this multilayered strategy.

Through support unit collaboration and partnership with the President's Office, all vice-presidential portfolios, all academic colleges, TLSE, Indigenous Engagement, IPA, and People and Resources, we will achieve this goal by 2020-2021.



- All levels of government work with and consider the University of Saskatchewan as a valued partner.
- There is less variability and anxiety in the university's government budget allocation.
- All those on campus who intersect with government are aligned with the plan, and we present a coherent, unified front with consistent messaging.

Strategic Goal 3

# ESTABLISH UNIVERSITY RELATIONS AS A GO-TO RESOURCE FOR THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY.

This goal is directly tied to the university's 2025 aspirations of productive collaboration and meaningful impact. It is tightly tied to the university's commitment area of boundless collaboration because it is the primary means for the successful achievement of this goal. In order to be seen as a resource, University Relations must have collaborative relationships across campus.

University Relations will forge partnerships, develop strategic initiatives and create appropriate objectives to achieve advancement, communication, relationship-building and reputational goals with academic and administrative departments, units and portfolios throughout the university. Specifically, we will:

- Establish partnership agreements regarding the management and funding of team members performing the work of development, communications and alumni relations in the colleges and other academic units.
- 2. Facilitate the process of defining campaign fundraising priorities across campus.
- Develop and formalize a community engagement network across campus.
- Build stronger support and management methods centrally, which assist in successful execution of advancement work within academic units.
- Replace the existing alumni and donor database with a more robust and effective tool that allows for better data collection and dissemination.

All planning areas of the university are involved in the success of this goal. The work of engaging and building relationships, resources and reputation with our stakeholders is ubiquitous on campus.

The foundation of success for this goal is that each college and academic unit of campus will have a clear and consistent support mechanism with regard to development, communications and alumni relations work to facilitate the college goals in these areas.

Through support unit collaboration and partnership with the President's Office, all vice-presidential portfolios, all academic colleges, the College of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies, TLSE, Indigenous Engagement, IPA, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), People and Resources, the University Library and Huskie Athletics, we will achieve this goal by 2020-2021.



- There will be better alignment with standard practices in advancement work throughout campus.
- We will improve advancement metrics.
- Staff and faculty will begin to understand their role in advancement work and will develop confidence and expertise.
- We will increase the university's collective capacity to accomplish goals related to development, communications and alumni relations.

Strategic Goal 4

# BUILD ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT WITH OUR EXTERNAL COMMUNITIES.

This goal is directly tied to each of the university's 2025 aspirations. It closely relates to the university's commitment area of inspired communities because those communities are the basis of our ability to build advocacy and support.

University Relations will implement objectives and strategic initiatives for the University of Saskatchewan to be consistently recognized for its impact and contributions to communities near and far. Communities will see the work of the university as embedded in their day-to-day lives, advocating for us in tangible ways. Specifically, we will:

- Implement provincial engagement program throughout communities in Saskatchewan in order to have an ongoing presence in their lives.
- 2. Build in more effective means for regularly reporting back to the community.
- 3. Empower and leverage the community engagement activities already taking place across campus.
- 4. Develop and formalize a community engagement network across campus.
- Complete the development of and launch our new brand platform, which will form the basis of our media and communications strategies.
- 6. Complete the strategy and launch our Regional Presence Plan, which is designed to deepen alumni engagement.
- 7. Develop a strong digital media strategy.

The collective efforts of colleagues throughout the university contribute to our ability to achieve this goal. University Relations' commitment to collaboration with academic leaders and community-oriented researchers, coupled with new, innovative and goal-oriented initiatives to be developed and implemented by our portfolio, will have a marked effort on how we are perceived in, and connected to, our communities.

Through widespread collaboration and partnership with all academic colleges, research leaders, Indigenous Engagement, Huskie Athletics and many others, we will achieve this goal by 2021-2022.



- We will increase the number of champions within governmental circles.
- We will increase favourable versus nonfavourable media coverage.
- We will increase our number of volunteers and others who are net promoters of the university in both public and private situations.
- Communities will understand our impact and presence.

# FRAME AND ADVANCE OUR INSTITUTIONAL NARRATIVES.

This goal is directly tied to each of the university's 2025 aspirations. It specifically relates to the university's commitment area of inspired communities because telling our story is key to inspiring our stakeholders to engage with the university.

University Relations will implement objectives and strategic initiatives that ensure the University of Saskatchewan's institutional narrative is understood and valued, and that all members of our campus community are able to tell these stories with impact. Our stories will be evident and highly visible, and will be the basis for communication and outreach. Specifically, we will:

- 1. Develop a comprehensive media campaign strategy.
- 2. Develop a strong digital media strategy.
- 3. Create internal processes to build our collective stories and enable shared understanding and consistency.
- 4. Increase stories told on campus through campus channels.
- 5. Ensure the new brand platform is the basis for all communications and that all formal internal and external communications utilize key messaging and imagery.
- 6. Work with units across campus to ensure they have the tools to use the new brand platform in their communications.
- Revise structured communications with alumni to ensure seamless coordination and cohesion, contribution to optimal impact and efficiency.

The foundation of success for this goal is a strong understanding throughout the university of our narrative, and a commitment to using it as the basis for communications. University Relations is committed to providing the tools, knowledge, support and expertise so that members of our community can see their work in our institutional narrative and can effectively carry it forward.

Through support unity collaboration and partnership with the President's Office, all vice-presidential portfolios, colleagues throughout the academy, TLSE, Indigenous Engagement, IPA, ICT, People and Resources, the University Library and Huskie Athletics, we will achieve this goal by 2019-2020.



- Students, faculty, staff, alumni and others in our community understand and value the university story and carry it into their conversations.
- We will increase share of traditional and digital media.
- We will improve reputation and institutional recognition locally, provincially and globally.
- Strengthened position in relevant international rankings.

Strategic Goal 6

# LEAD THE UNIVERSITY IN A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN.

This goal is directly tied to each of the university's 2025 aspirations. It especially relates to the university's commitment area of inspired communities because a comprehensive campaign will achieve meaningful change with and for our communities.

University Relations will engage the community in the planning of a highly strategic, implemented, multifaceted campaign, and will implement objectives and strategic initiatives for the University of Saskatchewan to be highly successful in its comprehensive campaign. Specifically, we will:

- Complete the development of and launch our new brand platform, which will form the basis of our media and communications strategies.
- 2. Complete the strategy and launch our Regional Presence Plan, which is designed to deepen alumni engagement.
- Replace existing alumni and donor database with a more robust and effective tool that allows for better data collection and dissemination.
- 4. Build the donor pipeline.
- Build in stronger support and management methods centrally, which assist in successful execution of advancement work within academic units.
- 6. Develop more robust metrics on donor and alumni engagement.
- 7. Build the campaign case for support through collaboration and engagement with the entire campus community.

We must mobilize the collective efforts of the university community in order to achieve this goal. University Relations is committed to coordinating, leveraging and leading this institutional initiative, which will have a long-lasting, positive impact. A comprehensive campaign affects all planning areas, raising reputation, recognition and resources of the entire university. Everyone will feel the benefits; everyone will be involved.

Through support unit collaboration, and partnership with the president's office, all vice-presidential portfolios, all academic colleges, Huskie Athletics, student and alumni groups, and administrative offices, units and portfolios campus wide, we will achieve this goal by 2024-2025.



- Our fundraising goal for the campaign will be achieved.
- Growing leadership and recognition in scientific, technological and social innovation.
- · Growth in commercialization outcomes.
- New and enhanced applied learning experiences for students.
- Increasingly empowered culture of experimentation and entrepreneurship among students, faculty, and staff.
- Growing global recognition and leadership in applying interdisciplinary approaches within our signature areas.
- Alumni engagement and support are strengthened, and are established on solid foundations for the future.

# WE ARE

# CREATIVE.

We embrace change and take strategic risks by seeking bold ideas with curiosity and enthusiasm.

# OPEN.

We nurture relationships with each other, on campus and with community partners that respect and honour different and diverse perspectives.

# TRUE.

We communicate clearly, keep our promises and focus on achieving amazing results.

To read the full university plan visit plan.usask.ca

