



AGENDA

College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Thursday, October 1, 2026 | 3:00 – 4:30 pm

W.P. Thompson 106

Attendance & Participation

- Meetings are held in-person.
- Zoom access is available by request only—please contact cgps.gov@usask.ca if you require remote access due to illness or prearranged accommodation.
- Graduate Chairs, if you are unable to attend, please appoint a delegate to ensure quorum and program representation is maintained.
- Upon arrival, please check in with CGPS staff. Your attendance will be recorded

Voting Procedures

- Voting will be conducted by a show of hands for in-person attendees. Online participants will vote using the chat function in Zoom.
- Some programs have multiple graduate chairs, but only one vote is permitted per program. Please determine your voting representative prior to the meeting.

Meeting Materials

- All meeting documents will be posted on the [CGPS Faculty Council website](#).
 - Members will receive a notification approximately one week prior to each meeting when materials are ready for review.
-

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OPENING REMARKS 3:00 – 3:10

1. Welcome from Elder Roland Duquette
2. Chair's Opening Remarks (D. Burshtyn)

DECISION ITEMS 3:10 – 3:15

3. Approval of the Agenda

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the October 1, 2026, agenda as circulated.

4. Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the May 28, 2026, minutes as circulated.

APPENDIX 1

5. Additional Nominations for CGPS Committee Fulfillment 2026-27 (L. McIntyre)

APPENDIX 2

Motion: That the additional nominations to CGPS Graduate Faculty Council Standing Committee membership recommended by the Nominations Committee be approved as presented (**McIntyre/Singh**)



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NOTICE OF MOTION 3:15 – 3:25

6. Minor Revisions: Doctoral Candidacy Assessment (J. Singh)

APPENDIX 3

Motion: That CGPS Faculty Council approves the revisions to policy 6.2. Doctoral Candidacy Assessment for immediate implementation (Singh/Chirkov)

DISCUSSION ITEM 3:25 – 3:35

7. Professional Doctorate Framework (J. Singh)

REPORTS & UPDATES 3:35 - 4:20 PM

8. Indigenous Engagement Coordinator Portfolio Update (A. Wolfe)

9. Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Scholar Report (M. Usunier, L. Johnson, A. Taylor)

10. Graduate Students' Association Report (S. Bui)

11. Society for Postdoctoral Scholars Update (R. Golaguri)

12. Dean's Report (D. Burshtyn)

- Annual Priorities
- Course Assessment Procedures Update (J. Singh)

APPENDIX 4

13. Announcements (D. Burshtyn)

14. Fall Convocation E-Vote process (C. Smith)

FOR INFORMATION

15. 2025-26 Annual Standing Committee Reports

APPENDIX 5

16. CGPS Annual Report to RSAW

APPENDIX 6

17. ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan Phase 4 Report ([link](#))

18. Questions

19. Adjournment



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AGENDA

College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
Graduate Faculty Council Meeting
Thursday, May 28, 2026 | 3:00 – 4:30 pm
ARTS 241

Attendance & Participation

- Meetings are held in-person.
Zoom access is available by request only—
please contact cgps.gov@usask.ca if you require
remote access due to illness or prearranged
accommodation.
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please appoint a delegate to ensure quorum
and program representation is maintained.
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prior to the meeting.

Meeting Materials

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[CGPS Faculty Council website](https://cgps.usask.ca/faculty-council).
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approximately one week prior to each meeting
when materials are ready for review.

Refreshments will be provided starting at 2:45 PM

Present: Rupesh Acharya, Shafiq Alam, Peter Alward, Leonzo Barreno, Paul Charles Bazin Webster, Britney Bergermann, Kristin Bett, Sunny Bui, Debby Burshtyn (chair) Samantha Carley, Doug Clark (del), Susan Detmer, Ehab Diab, Roy Dobson, Trustin Domes, David Elwood, Andrea Escalante (del) Cameron Forbes, Smita Garg, Supratim Ghosh, Benjamin Hoy, Jeremy Irvine, Emily Jenkins, George Katselis, Marquerite Koole, Lynn Lemisko, Zhi Li, Erique Lukong, Ann Martin, Monique Mayer, Laureen McIntyre, Stephan Milosavljevic, Nazeem Muhajarine, Ibironke Odumosu-Ayanu, Matthew Paige, Elizabeth Quinlan, Louise Racine, Monica Sarghie, Yolande Seddon, Jaswant Singh, Amaranta Sokol, Chris Soteros, Vicki Squires, Katherine Stewart, Glenn Stuart, Karim Tharani, Helen Vandenberg (del), Lynn Weber, Yangdou Wei, Tyler Wenzel, Joyce Wilson, Jing Xiao, Yang Yang. **Non-voting:** Kenisha Blair, Julissa Castillo, Alison Draude, Kassidy Guy, Amy Hassett, Leah Johnson, Sola Ogundana, Carolyn Pytlyk, Gwen Rose, Kayla Schwartz, Chelsea Smith (council support), Ashley Taylor, Marc Usunier, Mandy Wonsiak

Regrets: David Blackburn, Ryan Brook, Maud Ferrari, Rama Gokaraju, Nancy Gyurcsik, Cody Koloski, Wanda Martin, Lori McKee, Pierre-Francois Noppen, Mike Scott, Michael Szafron, Laila Valila

Called to order: 3:03 PM

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

KELLY CLEMENT MEMORIAL AWARD 3:00 – 3:10



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Marc Usunier will award this year's Kelly Clement Memorial Employee Service Award. This award recognizes the outstanding contributions of USask staff members to USask's graduate student community.

The 2025 awardee is Mandy Wonsiak (College of Engineering). Congratulations, Mandy!

DECISION ITEMS 3:10 – 3:30

1. Approval of the agenda

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the May 28, 2026, agenda as circulated. **Bui/Koole – CARRIED unanimously**

2. Approval of the minutes

APPENDIX 1

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the March 26, 2026, minutes as circulated. **Detmer/Acharya – CARRIED unanimously**

3. Interdisciplinary Committee Terms of Reference (M. Sârghie)

APPENDIX 2

Motion: That CGPS Faculty Council approves the updates to the Terms of Reference for the Interdisciplinary Committee (**Sârghie /McIntyre**) – **CARRIED unanimously**

Dr. Sarghie spoke to the proposed changes, highlighting they support the goal to reduce barriers for faculty involvement in the committee and add flexibility. The changes clarify the need for members to represent diverse academic units, replace the existing decolonization resource with the Indigenous Engagement Coordinator (voting), and add EDI as the collective responsibility of all members.

- It was clarified that members would benefit from having interdisciplinary supervisory or advisory committee experience to support students engaged in interdisciplinary RSAW, however, any interdisciplinary work will be recognized/considered.
- Updates to CGPS committee terms of reference will come forward next year.

4. Slate of nominations for CGPS committee fulfillment 2026-27 (L. McIntyre)

APPENDIX 3

Motion: That the recommended slate of CGPS Graduate Faculty Council Standing Committee membership in Appendix 3 recommended by the Nominations Committee be approved as presented (**McIntyre/Singh**) – **CARRIED unanimously**

Laureen McIntyre introduced the motion and noted that the slate of nominees filled 18 out of 21 vacant seats.

Concern noted from the floor that there is no NSERC representation from the College of Arts & Science on the Awards and Scholarships committee; this will be recommended back to the committee for next year. Nominations are received through a self-nomination process and there are additional opportunities for faculty to sit on awards subcommittees.



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5. Thesis/Dissertation requirements (J. Singh)

APPENDIX 4

Motion 1: CGPS Faculty Council approves the changes to policy section 4.5. *Project and Thesis Requirements (Forbes/Quinlan)* – **CARRIED unanimously**

Motion 2: CGPS Faculty Council approves the new policy section 4.6. *Styles, forms, content, formatting and required elements of the Thesis/Dissertation (Forbes/Quinlan)* – **CARRIED unanimously**

Jaswant Singh introduced the motion and described the changes to policy 4.5., and the new policy 4.6., including the requirement for a GenAI transparency statement. This came to council as notice of motion in March.

Questions from the floor:

- Can specific names of software be added to the GenAI statement (e.g., Image Pro) that are add-ons that rely on AI? It was clarified that the templates provide some direction on what is needed and the academic unit may increase specificity for what is included in the statement.
- Clarification needed whether editorial use of AI constitutes GenAI – it was confirmed that editorial use (e.g., functions such as Microsoft Word) does not need to be declared, but if those tools use GenAI, it must be declared.

REPORTS & UPDATES 3:30 - 4:20 PM

6. Interdisciplinary Studies Committee update (Chair, M. Sârghie)

Monica Sârghie provided a detailed on Interdisciplinary Studies (InterD) for the 2025-26 academic year and highlighted the need to elevate and support interdisciplinarity on campus to continue growth. Highlights include:

- InterD students totalled 43, of which 16% are Indigenous students
- 2/5 students at TedX were from InterD
- First inaugural InterD advisory committee and supervisor awards were awarded
- New InterD publication award to support student publications that require fees.

7. Professional Development update and IDP Testimonial (K. Blair, A. Hasset, A. Martin)

Kenisha Blair provided high-level updates on Professional Development (PD) initiatives and strategic priorities, including the Graduate Mentorship Program, Professional Skills Suite (new modules on conflict engagement and emotional intelligence in development for Fall 2026), LevelUP platform, Graduate student internships, PD for postdoctoral scholars, the new Beyond Grad School platform for master's students and faculty resource pages.

The Individualized Development Plan (IDP) was featured as a tool to support student goal setting and career planning. Ann Martin and Amy Hassett provided testimonials to support the use of the IDP.

- The degree requirements of a program and can mobilize more academic career paths. The Department of English plans to integrate IDP into the 990 seminar course to mobilize career transition for students in non-academic or academic adjacent positions. The aim is to use PD and the IDP as complementary to the degree, for students to explore further and deeper the possibilities of their own work



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- In the MPA program, IDP use has leveled access to resources, especially for students less likely to seek support. They have found that by implementing the IDP early in a student's program increases student agency and clarifies post-degree expectations.

8. Graduate Students' Association report (Palash Roy)

Outgoing GSA president presented as the new GSA executive were elected this week.

- Highlighted priorities for 2025-26 including childcare and non-profit status. Confirmed that non-profit status has been re-established; GSA is now investing revenue in secure interest bearing account to maximize the resources available to spend.
- GSA has noted increased engagement since the start of the pandemic
- Ongoing negotiation with city transit
- Thanks to outgoing GSA team – Lindsay, Mandela, Sunny and Laila

9. Society for Postdoctoral Scholars update (Andrea Escalante)

- New SPS elected recently
- Update on postdoc travel awards
- Plans to work on PD initiatives and improvements in onboarding
- New SPS team plans to take a consultative approach, listening to community, identifying needs, and building a strong foundation.

10. Dean's report (D. Burshtyn)

Report to RSAW included in meeting package

APPENDIX 5

11. Announcements

Dean Burshtyn highlighted the 2026 Falling Walls lab, the 3MT, which had increased participation from students in the social sciences, and the CIRTA/Impact+ program. The new fee for grad students will be implemented for Fall 2026 to support PD opportunities (e.g., the 'Beyond' platforms) with the goal to broaden PD reach to students.

Please see the CGPS newsletter and [college calendar](#) for lists of events, awards, application deadlines and calls for applications.

FOR INFORMATION

12. Convocation E-Vote Results

APPENDIX 6

13. Thesis Awards Results

APPENDIX 7

14. Questions

15. Adjournment – Detmer 4:12 PM

Governance Proposal Executive Summary

ITEM

Agenda Item Title: Approval of the 2026-27 committee membership roster
Motions: That the additional nominations to CGPS Graduate Faculty Council Standing Committee membership recommended by the Nominations Committee be approved as presented (McIntyre/Singh)
Presented by: Laureen McIntyre, Nominations Committee Chair
Action: ☐ For Discussion ☐ Notice of Motion ☒ For Approval

DETAILS

Office of Administration	College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Final Approval Body	CGPS Faculty Council
Recommended By	Nominations Committee
Purpose of the Proposal	To confirm the additional nominees to fill vacancies on CGPS faculty council and standing committees of council that were recruited over the spring/summer term.
Summary	In May 2026, CGPS Faculty Council approved filled 18 out of 21 vacant positions on CGPS Faculty Council and it's seven standing committees. Four additional positions became vacant following Council approval of the nominations. Faculty were recruited over the spring/summer to fill the 7 vacant positions and are being presented for approval.
Implementation	ASAP
Attachments	Additional Nominations 2026-27 for Council Approval



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Committee	Faculty member	Academic Unit	Tem end
Graduate Programs Committee	Ryan Brook	Animal and Poultry Science	2028
Postdoctoral Advisory Committee	Amanda Froelich-Chow	School of Public Health	2029
Interdisciplinary Studies Committee	Pammla Petrucka	Nursing	2027
Graduate & Postdoctoral Council	Matthew Toohey	Physics and Engineering Physics	2029
Graduate & Postdoctoral Council	David Cooper	Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology	2028
Graduate & Postdoctoral Council	Janet Hill	Veterinary Microbiology	2027
Graduate & Postdoctoral Council	Kristen Bett	Plant Sciences	2027

Governance Proposal Executive Summary

ITEM

Agenda Item Title:	Doctoral Candidacy Assessment
Motions:	To approve the revisions to policy 6.2. Doctoral Candidacy Assessment for immediate implementation.
Proposed and presented by:	Jaswant Singh
Action:	☐ For Discussion ☐ Notice of Motion ☒ For Approval

DETAILS

Office of Administration	College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Final Approval Body	CGPS Faculty Council
Recommended By	College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Purpose of the Proposal	To remove systemic barriers for students and provide student with the opportunity to have their voice heard following a 2 nd failed attempt at candidacy assessment.
Summary	The Doctoral Candidacy Assessment policy was implemented in May 2024, replacing the requirement for comprehensive examinations. A carry-over from the old policy was the requirement around a 2nd failed attempt at candidacy assessment: should a student receive two unsatisfactory outcomes, it would automatically result in a requirement to discontinue (RTD) from that doctoral program. This requirement does not allow for the standard RTD process to unfold (see steps below), thus removing the opportunity for the student to provide documentation for consideration and for the Associate Dean to make an informed decision about whether an RTD is appropriate. Standard RTD process (full policy and procedures here): 1. The academic unit submits an RTD recommendation to CGPS. 2. CGPS contacts the student with official notice that the recommendation has been received. The student is given 5 business days to supply additional information for the Associate Dean to review when the recommendation is under consideration as outlined in the notice. 3. After the period of notice has passed, the Associate Dean reviews the academic unit's recommendation, along with any additional information submitted by the student. 4. The associate dean determines whether to uphold the recommendation. Their decision and justification will be provided to the student and the academic unit.

	The attached policy has been revised to require the academic unit submit a RTD recommendation upon a second unsatisfactory outcome rather than an automatic discontinuation of the student's program.
Consultation and Approval Pathway	CGPS – Summer and Fall 2026 GAAC – September 16, 2026 Faculty Council - October 1, 2026
Implementation	ASAP
Attachments	Policy 6.2. revisions

6.2. DOCTORAL CANDIDACY ASSESSMENT

Purpose

To ensure that a student is sufficiently prepared to be successful in their doctoral research and dissertation a student must be able to demonstrate to their committee that they have:

- an adequate grasp of the current state of knowledge in the intended field of research;
- the potential ability to conduct advanced original research independently using relevant methodologies; and,
- the ability to communicate in ways appropriate to the field of research and practice.

If applicable, the candidacy assessment may also evaluate a student's capability to meet other knowledge or skill requirements set by the academic unit for the discipline.

Timing

The candidacy assessment will occur within 24 months of initial registration. For students who transfer from a master's to a doctoral program, the assessment will occur within 36 months of initial registration.

The candidacy assessment is scheduled to occur after the student has completed all course requirements. After satisfying the candidacy assessment, the candidate's focus will be on completing the doctoral research and dissertation.

Format

The principles of equity, transparency, and consistency will guide the approach to candidacy assessment within academic units.

The format and substance of the work for the candidacy assessment should be designed, to the greatest extent possible, to become a useful constitutive and formative part of the candidate's doctoral research and dissertation.

The doctoral candidacy assessment may be in written, oral, and/or experiential form, supporting diversity in disciplinary norms and innovation within programs. It may be administered at one time or as parts over time. Examples of formats include but are not limited to the preparation and communication of a dissertation research proposal or grant application; essays, papers, presentations, artistic works, or discussions focused on the state of knowledge in the student's intended field of doctoral research.

Each academic unit will establish and make available clear, written, and specific procedures that explain the scope, format, timing and criteria for the assessment in the program's guidelines.

The student's advisory committee must inform the student in writing at least 60 days in advance that a candidacy assessment is to take place, including the academic unit's procedures as well as preparatory guidance and assessment details specific to the student. At the student's request, and with the support of the advisory committee, the assessment may be scheduled earlier.

Unless the student and CGPS are informed otherwise in advance, the assessment committee for candidacy will be all members of the student's advisory committee.

Outcome

CGPS must always be advised of the results of the candidacy assessment on a satisfied/unsatisfactory basis, and the date when the assessment was completed.

A student who successfully completes the candidacy assessment is deemed a doctoral candidate (e.g., Ph.D. Candidate). The student's official transcript will note the date when the candidacy assessment was satisfied.

A student who does not satisfy the requirements of their candidacy assessment is permitted a second attempt at the recommendation of the academic unit and with the permission of the Dean of CGPS or designate. The second attempt should be scheduled from one to three months from the date of the first assessment; exceptions will be considered by the Dean of CGPS or designate. ~~If there is a second unsatisfactory outcome, will automatically result in~~ **the academic unit will either:**

- a) submit a recommendation of requirement to discontinue from that doctoral program to CGPS for assessment, or**
- b) submit a recommendation that the student be transferred to a master's program to CGPS for assessment.**

An unsatisfactory candidacy assessment, and/or the denial of a second attempt at the candidacy assessment, may be appealed to the Graduate Academic Affairs Committee of CGPS on substantive grounds in accordance with Part IV of the University Council's *Procedures for Student Appeals in Academic Matters*, or on grounds other than substantive academic judgment limited to those outlined in Part V.B.1.



2026-27 CGPS Priorities

**In 2026, develop a new guiding document in alignment
with the emerging institutional strategic plan 2035 *Local to Global***

Recruitment and Funding	Transformative Decolonization Leading to Reconciliation
• Improve Tri-Agency success while adapting to changes for scholarships • Continue to provide leadership in the coordination of centralized recruitment efforts and marketing of program and unit initiatives. • Accelerate international partnerships with student mobility (barrier reduction)	• Provide community framework and wrap-around supports for graduate students: ○ Launch New Tailored Tri-Agency Scholarship Application Supports ○ Develop targeted professional development • Develop Guidance for Decolonizing Practices across program types (multiyear)
Program Innovation	Improve Student and Postdoc Outcomes
• Champion Interdisciplinarity through incubator, partnership and network building • Increase InterD Program visibility • Adopt standards for professional doctorates • Degree-level competencies next steps—facilitate program mapping	• Launch new GPS 960 and begin GPS961 Review • Internal flexible internship program • IP Guide update • Address need for postdoc RCR training • Develop <i>regular</i> suite of graduate faculty focused training
Exceptional Service	Advocacy & Advancement
• Review and update faculty membership policies and processes • Adopt new AI-enabled solutions to enhance efficiency and streamline processes for internal teams and stakeholders • Support units with Course Assessment Policy Implementation • Staff soft skill development	• Implement a donor relationship strategy (<i>e.g. invite to 3MT</i>) • Formalize partnership with Advancement to access corporate funding sources with a focus on student work integrated learning • Support GSA Daycare initiative



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STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

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Graduate Academic Affairs Committee.....	6
Interdisciplinary Studies Committee	7
Postdoctoral Advisory Committee.....	8
Nominations Committee	10



Executive Committee

Committee Composition

George Katselis (Scholarships & Awards), Laureen McIntyre (Graduate Programs), Steve Milosavljevic (Postdoc Advisory), Laureen McIntyre (Nominations), Monica Sârghie (InterD), Debby Burshtyn (Dean and Chair of GAAC), Jaswant Singh (Associate Dean), Palash Roy (GSA President), Laila Valila (GSA VP Indigenous), Tamanna Jahan and Mohammad Miah (SPS Executive Representative)

Committee Activities

The Executive Committee is a standing committee of CGPS Graduate Faculty Council comprised of the Chairs of each of Council's standing committees. Key responsibilities include coordination of business across the standing committees, to review and coordinate Council agendas and to provide advice to the Dean and the Associate Dean on strategic areas for the college.

Awards & Scholarships Committee

Members of the Awards Committee, as a standing committee of the CGPS Council, are selected to ensure representation across various disciplines, in line with the Tri-Agency funding streams.

Committee Composition

George Katselis (Chair), Gurpreet Aulakh, Bill Biligetu, Fang Xiang Wu, Ajay Dalai, Neeraj Dhar, Bishnu Acharya, Kirsten Fisher, Peter Robinson, Stella Spriet, Wanda Martin, Angelica Lang, Lindsay Carlson. Other faculty members were invited to serve on the committee, as needed.

Committee Activities

The Committee is responsible for reviewing and adjudicating graduate award applications. Among these are donor-funded scholarships and bursaries. The committee is also tasked with the important job of recommending the top-ranked applications in the Tri-Agency (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC) for the Canada Graduate Research Scholarships – Doctoral (CGRD-D) program and allocating awards to the top-ranked applications in the Canada Graduate Research Scholarships – Master's (CGRS-M) program. Also included in this portfolio are the internally funded competitions such as the Teacher-Scholar Doctoral Fellowship, Dean's Scholarship, Indigenous Graduate Leadership Scholarship (IGLS), and several thesis awards.

Teacher-Scholar Doctoral Fellowships

The Teacher-Scholar Doctoral Fellowships provide an annual stipend of approximately \$20,000 from CGPS and a mentored teaching experience, which is made possible by partnerships with other graduate units and the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning. 15 Doctoral students across campus received this Fellowship in 2025/26.

Dean's Scholarship Program

The Dean's Doctoral Scholarship program is structured to incentivize outstanding Doctoral research in two main areas:

- Recruitment: attract top-quality USask Master's students into our Doctoral programs
- Institutional impact: incentivize high-caliber applications to the Tri-Agencies

Up until the fall of 2025, international students were not eligible to apply to the Tri-Agency Doctoral program. The Dean's Doctoral for International students was a separate internal competition that ran in the winter term. The application itself mirrored the Tri-Agency Doctoral application. The Awards Committee adjudicated the competition and was able to award 10 Dean's International Scholarships at a rate of \$24,000/year for two years. In addition to the Dean's International is the Dean's Domestic Scholarships. At \$24,000/year for two years as well, these Dean's Domestic Scholarships are awarded out by the Committee to the top-ranked Tri-Council doctoral applicants who did not receive Tri-Agency scholarships.

Moving into the 2025/26 academic year, a separate competition for the Dean's International Scholarship was no longer required because of changes in the eligibility criteria for the Doctoral program. Going forward, Dean's International recipients are now being adjudicated and selected in the same manner as the Dean's Domestic. Additionally, an increase to the Dean's scholarships was approved for the 206-27 academic year at a rate of \$30,000/year.

Indigenous Graduate Leadership Scholarship

In 2018/2019, CGPS awarded the first Indigenous Graduate Leadership Awards to recognize students who have demonstrated academic excellence and leadership with a personal commitment to improving their communities. The value of the PhD award is \$30,000 per year for up to 4 years, and the Master's awards are valued at \$25,000 for up to 2 years. In 2025/2026, 7 new



students took up an IGLS award (3 Doctoral and 4 Master’s).

Indigenous Graduate Student Recruitment Scholarship

The Indigenous Graduate Student Recruitment Scholarship provides additional funds to support units in their recruitment strategies. Units nominate eligible incoming students after an offer of admission is made. In 2026, CGPS provided \$10,000 scholarships to 8 new Indigenous students from programs and departments such as Indigenous Studies, History, Nursing, and the School of Public Policy.

The Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship (SIOS) program (in partnership with the province of Saskatchewan)

USask received \$827,000 in SIOS funding for the 2025/26 academic year. This funding supported several targeted initiatives. CGPS utilized this award to provide top-up funding for national award recipients and to recognize the excellence and innovation of outstanding students who received the Tri-Agency awards. Specifically, \$6,000 was awarded to 52 CGRS-M recipients, and \$7,500 was awarded to 18 CGRS-D recipients.

New Faculty Graduate Student Support Program

The CGPS previously administered the New Faculty Graduate Student Support Program to provide start-up funds to new tenure-track faculty to help establish their graduate education and research programs. 20 new tenure-track faculty were provided funding for the 2025-26.

Starting May 2026, CGPS provides funding allocations to colleges directly; colleges are able to strategically provide support to their new faculty. New faculty members will no longer apply directly to CGPS.

Tri-Agency Competitions

In addition to the adjudication of internal awards, the Awards Committee is also responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the Tri-Agencies for the CIHR, SSHRC, and NSERC Master’s and Doctoral scholarships. This past year, different faculty assisted the Awards Committee in the adjudication processes, which helped with the workload and provided a wider range of subject-matter expertise. The Awards Committee added another measure of support this past year by providing selected applicants with additional editorial support before submitting to the national competition. The table below provides a summary of Tri-Agency activity in 2025-2026.

Award	Applications	Quota	Successful
Tri-Agency (CGRS-M)	189	58	58
CIHR (CGRS-D)	34	3	4*
NSERC (CGRS- D)	85	21	9
SSHRC (CGRS-D)	67	18	8

* Institutions can submit over quota with meritorious applications from self-identified Indigenous students.

In 2025-2026, the Indigenous Scholars Awards Supplement (ISAS) was awarded to 3 recipients. This initiative is designed to increase opportunities for Indigenous students in Canadian postsecondary institutions by providing financial support to those pursuing master ’s-level research through the CGRS M program to support high-caliber Indigenous scholars.

Graduate Funding Review

The CGPS 75th Anniversary Recruitment Scholarship funding model has now gone through 4 full fiscal years. It was also established to enable units to recruit top Master's and Doctoral talent to USask. Annual allocations to units are calculated by leveraging Tri-Agency success from both the supervisor and graduate student perspectives.

Approximately \$4 million is available to support students through the 75th Anniversary Recruitment Scholarship and Student Support Fund (SSF) funding arrangements. The 75th Anniversary Scholarship provides units with funding for their recruitment efforts and assists with helping ensure Doctoral students receive a minimum funding guarantee. The Student Support Fund provides stable and easy-to-use base funds to support graduate students with stipends and allows units to award funding as a non-competitive stipend without applying scholarship criteria (e.g. funding can be used to offset graduate teaching assistantships, top-ups, etc.).

Conclusions and observations of the committee Chair

The CGPS Awards Committee is composed of dedicated faculty members whose work requires significant time, effort, and commitment. Committee members must familiarize themselves with the selection criteria for a wide range of awards, including major Tri-Agency competitions spanning multiple disciplines. While this diversity presents challenges, it also strengthens the committee, bringing together a broad range of expertise that contributes to balanced and robust



adjudication processes. Despite differing academic backgrounds, members consistently demonstrate a shared commitment to fairness, objectivity, and excellence in decision-making. The considerable effort invested by each member in adjudicating awards is truly commendable.

Notably, committee members exhibit a genuine dedication to ensuring that scholarships and awards are administered ethically and effectively, always prioritizing the best interests of students, departments, and donors.

The 2025/26 academic year has brought many changes to the Graduate Scholarships and Awards portfolio. George Katselis, who had previously served as an ad hoc reviewer and Co-Chair, was appointed Chair for the first time. Leah Johnson, who joined CGPS in Spring 2024, has now completed her first full fiscal year. In Spring 2025, the portfolio underwent a restructuring in response to the evolving graduate awards landscape and a renewed strategic focus. The Graduate Awards Officers now play an even more important role supporting the committee and running scholarship opportunities.

Looking ahead, the Awards Committee can expect additional enhancements aimed at improving adjudication processes. Several dedicated faculty members joined the committee this past year to assist with Tri-Agency competitions. A subsequent debrief session with these reviewers resulted in several actionable improvements, including the development of a revised scoring rubric and the creation of a new Tri-Agency subcommittee. This subcommittee will help distribute workload more effectively; however, recent changes to the Tri-Agency Doctoral program are expected to increase application volumes, necessitating the recruitment of additional reviewers. Continued engagement and collaboration between the Awards Committee and this subcommittee will be essential.

We are also pleased to report the successful implementation of the Blackbaud Awards Management System. Rolled out over the summer and fully utilized during the year, the system has completed its first full application cycle. Blackbaud has significantly improved efficiency, transparency, and overall user experience, receiving very positive feedback from students, faculty, and reviewers alike.

From a student perspective, the CGPS Awards Hub simplifies the application process by reducing

duplication when applying to multiple awards. Applicants can track application status, manage reference requests, and send automated reminders to referees directly through the system.

For faculty serving as referees, Blackbaud offers a streamlined, intuitive submission process for letters of support and supporting documents. Reviewers benefit from enhanced functionality, including centralized task management and the ability to review applications side-by-side during scoring. Automated notifications further improve communication and efficiency throughout the adjudication process.

Key highlights from this past year include:

- Policy updates related to graduate funding, including a revised definition of a “major award.”
- The implementation of the Blackbaud Awards Management System, resulting in more efficient application processing and faster adjudication timelines.
- A 2.5% increase in the number of scholarship and bursary recipients.
- The launch of the CGPS Awards Hub, which automatically matches students to relevant funding opportunities based on their profile information.
- Enhanced processes for faculty referees, including simplified document submission and improved usability.

Additionally, the Canada Impact + Research Training Award Program, a one-time initiative by the Tri-Agencies was launched in Winter 2025. This program aims to strengthen research capacity and support high-impact Doctoral and Postdoctoral projects across Canada. The University of Saskatchewan participated in Waves 1 and 2, successfully recruiting high-caliber scholars engaged in diverse research addressing critical societal challenges.

Finally, at the end of each academic year, the Awards Committee convenes to reflect on processes and identify areas for improvement. This annual debrief (date to be confirmed) will once again inform recommendations, which will be incorporated into future planning and reporting.



Graduate Programs Committee

Committee Composition

Mandela Alema (GSA), Anas El-Aneed, Maud Ferrari, Ann Martin, Wanda Martin, Laureen McIntyre (chair), Debajyoti Mondal, Ahmed Mostafa, Jonathan Norton, and Jaswant Singh (Associate Dean). Committee Support: Chelsea Smith

Committee Activities

The Graduate Programs Committee is a standing committee of CGPS Faculty Council. The committee approves new programs, program modifications, new course proposals, and course modifications. The committee met twice per month from September 1 – June 15. The committee increased meeting frequency this academic year to address a growth in the volume of proposal submissions but noted a reduction in the number of proposals in the Winter and Spring terms.

New Programs

This academic year, the Graduate Programs Committee approved two new programs:

- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Improvement Science
- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Large Animal Veterinary Specialty Internship

Program Modifications

This academic year, the committee approved changes to 39 programs. Changes for 11 of these programs required approval through the governance processes beyond University Course Challenge.

➤ Changes to Admissions Qualifications

- M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering – New Accelerated Admissions Pathway
- Ph.D. in Nursing
- Ph.D. in Public Policy
- Ph.D. in Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology (new direct entry)
- Master of Business Administration

➤ Program Terminations

- Postgraduate Degree Specialization Certificate: Nurse Practitioner
- Graduate Pathways Certificate (University of Saskatchewan Language Centre)
- Graduate Certificate in Improving Teaching and Learning in Health Professions Education

- Graduate Certificate in Foundations for Registered Nurse Specialty Practice
- Master of Mathematics (M.Math.) - Project-based

➤ Program Changes

These include changes to course requirements, additions of concentrations, changes to program type (thesis, project, or course-based), reduction of overall credit units, changes to residency requirements, changes to minimum grade requirements, and program name changes.

- **Applied Microbiology:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Direct Entry, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Non-Direct Entry, Master of Science (M.Sc.) - Thesis-based, Transfer from M.Sc. to Ph.D.
- **Biological Psychiatry:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Direct Entry, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Non-Direct Entry, Transfer from Master's to Ph.D.
- **Biostatistics:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Master of Science (M.Sc.) - Thesis-based, Transfer from MSc to PhD pathway
- **Food Science:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Direct Entry, Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Non-Direct Entry, Master of Science (M.Sc.) - Thesis-based, Transfer from M.Sc. to Ph.D.
- **History:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Master of Arts (M.A.) - Thesis-based, Transfer from Master's to Ph.D.
- **Kinesiology:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Direct Entry, Master of Science (M.Sc.) - Thesis-based, Transfer from M.Sc. to Ph.D.
- **Master of Education (M.Ed.)** in Health Professions Education (course-based)
- **Master of Nursing (M.N.)** - Course-Based Professional Practice Concentration
- **Psychology:** Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Clinical Stream, Master of Arts (M.A.) - Clinical Stream - Thesis-based, Transfer from Master's to Ph.D. - Clinical Stream
- **Quality Teaching in Health Professions Education** Graduate Certificate (G.Cert)
- **Substance Use Health and Wellbeing** Graduate Certificate (G.Cert.)
- **Sustainable Water Management** Graduate Certificate (G.Cert)
- **Veterinary Pathology** - Master of Science (M.Sc.) - Project-based



HIGHLIGHTS

M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering – New Accelerated Admissions Pathway

This new admission pathway offers the opportunity for exceptional B.Sc. Mechanical Engineering students at USask to get a head start on research and M.Sc. course requirements. Students admitted through this pathway are expected to complete the M.Sc. in Mechanical Engineering within 12 months – 16 months of registration in their master's program by completing up to two 800-level courses during their B.Sc. program. This is the second accelerated admission pathway approved at USask.

New courses

GPC approved 36 new courses, 6 of which were approved as part of new programs. Thirty courses were approved through University Course Challenge (UCC).

Course Modifications

Course modification includes changes to course titles, course descriptions, credit units, prerequisites, notes, progression plans, cross-listings, hours and course deletions. The Graduate Programs Committee approved modifications for 103 courses, including 5 course deletions.

GPC SUMMARY

College/School	New programs	Program Changes / Terminations	New Courses	Course Modifications
Agriculture and Bioresources	0	8	4	10
Arts and Science	0	7	8	14
Dentistry	0	0	0	0
Education	0	3	5	7
Edwards	0	1	1	1
Engineering	0	1	1	0
Environment & Sustainability	0	1	1	15
Kinesiology	0	3	1	1
Law	0	0	0	0
Medicine	1	4	8	12
Nursing	0	4	2	4
Pharmacy & Nutrition	0	0	0	3
Public Health	0	4	3	1
JSGS	0	1	1	36
Veterinary Medicine	1	1	2	1

Graduate Academic Affairs Committee

Committee Composition

Mandela Alema (GSA), Debby Burshtyn (Dean, CGPS and Chair), Valery Chirkov, Cameron Forbes, Lynn Lemisko, Shelley Peacock, Elizabeth Quinlan, Jaswant Singh, and Joyce Wilson. Committee Support: Chelsea Smith

Committee Activities

The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee (GAAC) is a standing committee of CGPS Faculty Council. GAAC reviews and recommends changes to academic policies, approves program requirements for special case admissions, acts on appeals relation to admissions and grievances, and advises on initiatives and policy to support the diverse student population. GAAC meets once per month from September – May.

Policy development

The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee developed, reviewed and recommended 18 policy revisions to CGPS Faculty Council.

Policy	GAAC Approval
Section 3. Supervision	
3.1. Role and Selection of Supervisor	18-Dec-25
3.2. Advisory Committee for thesis and dissertation-based programs	
3.2.1. Considerations for Committee Composition	
3.2.2. Role of Additional Members (new section)	
3.2.3. Role of the Cognate member (new section)	
3.2.4. Advisory Committee Composition	
Section 4. Program Progression	
4.2. Annual Progress Reports	18-Mar-26
4.3.1. Time in Program Extensions	
4.4.5. Transfer from Master’s Program to PhD Program	
4.5. Thesis and Dissertation Requirements	
4.6. Styles, Forms, Content, Formatting, and Required Elements of the Thesis/Dissertation (new section)	
Section 8. Defence	
8.5. Oral Examination of the Master’s Thesis	18-Mar-26
Section 21. Course and Program Proposals	
21.1. New Course Proposals	18-Mar-26
21.1.1 Special Topics Courses	
21.2. Revisions to Existing Courses	
21.3. New Program and Replacement Program Proposals	



21.4. Revisions to Existing Programs	
21.7. Cotutelle Programs	

Other committee work

• **Ethics Courses Review:**

The committee provided feedback on the revised GPS 960.0 Introduction to Ethics and Integrity course. The revised course has clear course outcomes, expands on ethical AI use and expectations, is aligned with Tri-agency and Usask Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) policies, focuses on authentic learning and application, includes Indigenous perspective, and emphasizes Academic Integrity in relation to personal and professional competencies. The course will go live in September 2026.

• **Special Case Admissions**

The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee reviewed and approved two special case admissions (PhD in Engineering Education and Master of Education course-based)

• **Progress Report template revisions**

The committee provided formative feedback provided on a new GPS 210 Progress Report form to better support units in assessing the progress of their graduate students and approved changes to the form, which were later endorsed by CGPS Faculty Council.

Interdisciplinary Studies Committee

Committee Composition

Monica M. Sarghie (Chair) Dean Chamberlain, Pammla Petrucka, Cynthia Wallace, Nathaniel Osgood, Azita Haddadi (T1), Mirela David (T2) Aurora Wolfe (CGPS consulting member), Ghazal Mousavian (Student member). Committee support: Luis Corredor Duarte.

Overview

The 2025-26 period was marked by significant growth in the Interdisciplinary Studies (InterD) program, with increased enrolment, the introduction of new student and faculty recognition initiatives, and continued efforts to strengthen interdisciplinary engagement across the University of Saskatchewan.

The Committee welcomed several new members during the year, including Dr. Nathaniel Osgood and Dr. Mirela David. The Committee also continued to expand its network of faculty supervisors and advisors, welcoming

new contributors to the program and strengthening connections with academic units and interdisciplinary partners across campus.

Student Numbers, Admissions, Defences, and Awards

The program experienced substantial growth during the 2025-26 academic year.

During this period:

- **13 new students were admitted** to the InterD program.
- **Five students completed their degrees**, including two graduates during the academic year and three graduates at the June 2026 Convocation.
- The program reached **43 active students**, representing a significant increase from the historical average of approximately 20 students over the previous four years.

The Committee extends its gratitude to all faculty members who participated in admissions reviews and student mentoring throughout the year.

INTD 990 Events and Student Engagement

The Committee continued to support student professional development and interdisciplinary scholarship through the INTD 990 seminar and associated programming.

InterD Keynote Lecture (November 14, 2025)

The annual InterD Keynote Lecture featured Dr. Maureen Reed, USask Distinguished Professor and UNESCO Co-Chair in Biocultural Diversity, Sustainability, Reconciliation and Renewal. Her presentation, Learning Together, Working Together: A Journey in Transdisciplinary Sustainability Research, highlighted the value of collaborative and community-engaged approaches to addressing complex societal challenges.

W[InterD]ialogues (March 9, 2026)

The Committee hosted W[InterD]ialogues, focused on mentorship and graduate student success. The event featured Dr. Nora Dominguez, President Emeritus of the International Mentoring Association and Director of the Mentoring Institute at the University of New Mexico. Discussions explored developmental networks, mentorship practices, and strategies for supporting graduate student achievement.



InterD Annual Student Symposium (April 30, 2026)

The second annual InterD Student Symposium showcased the work of interdisciplinary graduate researchers and celebrated inclusive excellence within the program. The Symposium provided students with opportunities to share their research, receive feedback, and engage with faculty and peers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds.

To further recognize student achievement and encourage excellence in research communication, the Committee introduced People's Choice Awards for the Best Presentation and for Research with Greatest Impact.

Program Development and Innovation

The Committee continued to explore opportunities for strengthening interdisciplinary graduate education at USask. Feedback gathered from students, faculty members, and program partners identified several priority areas, including:

- Greater recognition of interdisciplinary supervision and mentorship.
- Enhanced support for interdisciplinary research dissemination.
- Additional opportunities for student engagement and professional development.
- Development of interdisciplinary courses and shared learning experiences across academic units.

In response, several new initiatives were launched.

InterD Recognition Awards

To acknowledge the contributions of faculty and students to the interdisciplinary community, the Committee developed and implemented three new awards:

- InterD Supervisor Award
- InterD Advisor Award
- InterD Publication Award

The development of these awards included consultation with the Committee and the creation of nomination procedures and terms of reference.

Governance and Admissions Enhancements

The Committee reviewed and updated its governing documents during the year. Key changes included:

- Revision of the InterD Committee Terms of Reference, subsequently approved by CGPS Faculty Council.

- Development of Generative Artificial Intelligence disclosure guidelines for admission applications to support transparency and consistency in the admissions process.

Finally, the Committee thanks its members, faculty supervisors, advisors, and students for their continued dedication to interdisciplinary scholarship and graduate education. The Committee looks forward to building on this year's successes through continued program growth, innovation, and collaboration across the university community.

Postdoctoral Advisory Committee

Committee Composition

Steven Milosavljevic (Committee Chair), Mohammad Islam Miah (SPS), Jaswant Singh, Meghna Ramaswamy, Andrew Freywald, Jonathan Norton, Meena Sakharkar, Erika Dyck, Tyler Wenzel, Lin Yang (Postdoc Rep), Kenisha Blair (CGPS PD consulting member). Committee Support: Luis Corredor Duarte.

Committee Activities

The Chair would like to sincerely thank all committee members for their contributions throughout the year. Special appreciation is extended to committee members who supported the adjudication of SPS Travel Awards and participated in discussions related to new postdoctoral funding opportunities, professional development programming, and the establishment of the inaugural Postdoctoral Fellow Excellence Awards.

Year in Review

The Postdoctoral Studies Advisory Committee completed its ninth year of operation during the 2025-2026 academic year. The committee continued to provide advice and support on initiatives affecting postdoctoral scholars while serving as a forum for collaboration among the Society of Postdoctoral Scholars (SPS), the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS), and the Office of the Vice-President Research (OVPR).

A major milestone during the year was the continued development of the Postdoctoral Fellow Excellence Awards. The committee reviewed and refined the Terms of Reference, application process, and adjudication rubric. Through several meetings, members worked collaboratively to establish award



criteria, application requirements, and evaluation weightings. By February 2026, the committee finalized the framework, confirming a self-nomination process supported by two letters of support and an evaluation rubric emphasizing research and scholarly contributions, leadership, and outreach activities. Following final institutional approvals, the inaugural Postdoctoral Fellow Excellence Awards competition was successfully launched. The committee completed the adjudication process and selected two recipients, marking an important milestone in recognizing excellence and impact within the University of Saskatchewan postdoctoral community.

The committee also reviewed and provided feedback on the third round of the Living Skies Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. Discussions focused on interdisciplinary supervision requirements, inclusivity of scholarly contributions across disciplines, adjudication considerations, and recruitment objectives. Following the committee's review, the third round of the Living Skies Postdoctoral Fellowship competition was launched to support the recruitment of up to nine outstanding postdoctoral fellows to the University of Saskatchewan. The program continued to advance the University's signature areas of research while promoting interdisciplinary collaboration through its co-supervision model and external mentorship requirements.

Throughout the year, members received updates on several new and continuing funding opportunities for postdoctoral scholars, including:

- Misiweskamik International Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- Mitacs Industrial Postdoctoral Fellowships.
- Canada Impact+ Research Training Awards (CIRTA).
- Living Skies Postdoctoral Fellowships.
- Canada Postdoctoral Research Awards (CPRA), which replaced the former Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship competition.

Throughout the year, the committee received regular updates from the Society of Postdoctoral Scholars (SPS) regarding its activities and priorities. These included networking and community-building initiatives, professional development workshops, administration of the SPS Travel Awards competition, and advocacy efforts related to immigration and employment documentation requirements for postdoctoral fellows.

The committee provided advice and support on several of these initiatives, particularly regarding the administration of the SPS Travel Awards, including reviewing and selecting award recipients. In addition, members received updates from the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) on postdoctoral programming, including activities delivered during Postdoctoral National Appreciation Week and other professional development opportunities available to the postdoctoral community.

The committee would like to acknowledge the contributions of several members whose terms concluded during the academic year, including Andrew Freywald, Jonathan Norton, Mohammad Miah, and Lin Yang. Their expertise and commitment greatly contributed to the committee's work.

Professional Development Initiatives

The following opportunities were promoted or delivered to postdoctoral scholars during the 2025-2026 academic year:

- Postdoctoral National Appreciation Week (September 2025)
 - Launching an Academic Career Panel Discussion
 - Annual Postdoctoral Reception and Networking Event
 - Postdoctoral Onboarding Session
 - Why Generic Resumes Won't Get You a Job Offer
- How to Decide Between an Academic and Non-Academic Career
- Is a Faculty Job Right for You?
- From Postdoc to Research Faculty course (virtual)
- McCall MacBain Postdoctoral Scholars Teaching and Leadership Program (2 postdocs were successfully awarded and completed this fellowship in 2026)
- What's Next After Your Postdoc: Strategies for Career Planning Outside Academia (TMU)
- Annual Canadian Career Symposium (GPDN)
- Falling Walls Lab Research Competition for Early Career Researchers – 1 postdoc advanced to finals
- Research Statements for the Academic Job Market
- Diversity/Equity/Inclusivity Statements for the Academic Job Market
- How to Explore Career Options in Industry
- Ethical Use of AI in Higher Education



- Why A Successful Job Search is a Focused Job Search?
- How to Identify and Research Non-Academic Employers?
- Will AI Help or Hurt My Job Search
- How to Build and Grow your Network for Non-Academic Jobs?
- Effective Interviewing Skills Workshop
- Individual Development & Career Planning Sessions
- Resume & CV Writing Workshop
- Overqualified or Underqualified? What It Means and How to Navigate It
- How to Job Search During Uncertain Times
- Mentorship Session delivered in partnership with the International Mentoring Association
- Beyond the Professoriate PhD and Postdoctoral Career Conference (May 2026)

18 new committee members were recommended. Recruitment of three outstanding vacancies is still underway.

Postdoctoral scholars also continued to benefit from professional development opportunities delivered through CGPS and institutional partners (e.g. GPS 986 through the GMCTL), supporting career exploration in both academic and non-academic sectors.

Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is a standing committee of CGPS Graduate Faculty Council primarily responsible for preparing the annual slate of recommended CGPS committee members for approval by council.

Committee Composition

Laureen McIntyre (Chair), Chris Zhang, Paul Jones, Valery Chirkov, Dinesh Dardarwal, Debby Burshtyn, Jaswant Singh, Chelsea Smith (committee support), Julissa Castillo (committee support)

Committee Activities

The Nominations Committee plays a crucial role in recommending graduate faculty members for various positions within CGPS Graduate Faculty Council and its seven standing committees. The committee manages approximately 25% of total voting seats across the ecosystem of CGPS' governance.

On March 17th, the annual recruitment campaign was launched, during which committee members actively identified and encouraged individuals to self-nominate as part of the process. For the 2026-27 cycle a total of



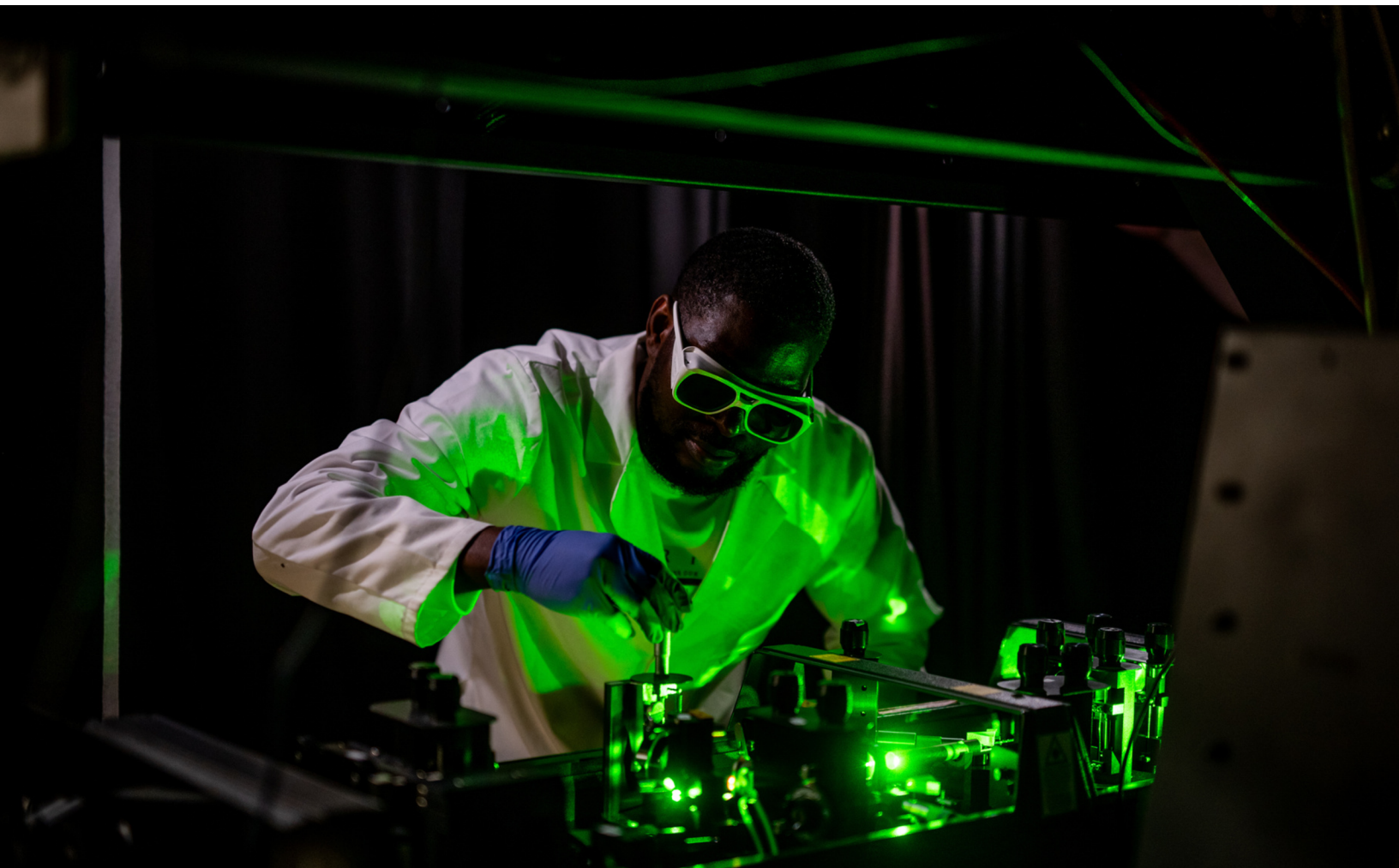


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College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

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APPENDIX 6



Annual Report 2025-26

Date: May 21, 2026



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



Message from the Dean



Graduate students and postdoctoral scholars are central to the University of Saskatchewan's research mission, advancing discovery, innovation, creative scholarship, and professional training. Their contributions strengthen the university's impact across disciplines and prepare future researchers and professionals to address complex challenges.

Over the past year, graduate education has continued to evolve within a landscape shaped by policy shifts, global uncertainty, and rapid technological change. As I began my second term as Dean, I remained committed to providing responsive leadership during a period of both pressure and opportunity, with a continued focus on supporting graduate student success.

This report highlights key developments, student accomplishments, and the collective efforts of faculty and staff to sustain a strong, inclusive, and forward-looking graduate community. I am grateful for the dedication, resilience, and collaboration that continue to define graduate education at USask.

Sincerely,

Dr. Debby Burshtyn
Dean, College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

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Recognizing and Funding Excellence

One of the most significant milestones in 2025 was the launch of the long-anticipated **CGPS Awards HUB**, a centralized graduate application and awarding platform. The HUB streamlines funding searches, applications, and adjudication, improving efficiency for students while simplifying reference requests and application reviews for faculty.

In total, graduate students received over \$4 million in Tri-Agency funding in the 2025-26 year.

In January, CGPS held its 2nd annual **Celebrating U reception** to honour recipients of Tri-Agency and CGPS awards and welcomed a full house in recognition of academic excellence. The names of major scholarship recipients are curated on the [CGPS website](#).

In 2025, three outstanding PhD students were awarded **Vanier Scholarships** in the final year of the program – Arianna Gibson (SSHRC), Jeremy Irvine (NSERC) and Jinnath Rehana Ritu (NSERC).

	CIHR	NSERC	SSHRC
Master’s	21	33	40
Doctoral	3	28	40
Vanier	1	5	3

Active students receiving Tri-Agency Funding 2025-26

Each year, CGPS selects two **Governor General’s Gold Medals** are awarded to PhD recipients, one at Fall Convocation and one at Spring Convocation. At Fall 2025 Convocation, Dr. Geneveave Barbo received the medal for her research on immersive virtual reality simulations designed to better prepare nursing students to support migrants facing mental health challenges. The Spring 2026 recipient was embargoed at the time of this report.

The first wave of the federally funded **Canada Impact+ Research Training Awards program** launched in December 2025, to recruit PhD and postdoctoral trainees to Canadian institutions from abroad into eight research priority areas. USask was allocated 6 postdoctoral and 13 doctoral awards in total. Wave 1 generated strong interest from USask faculty, enabling awards to be offered across most priority areas, subject to limited allocations. Wave 2 awards will be allocated in June 2026, with a targeted focus on priority areas that were underrepresented in the first wave.

The Government of Saskatchewan offers two scholarships to support graduate and postgraduate students pursuing research and demonstrating leadership in their fields. In 2025-26, Thulani Hewavithana was the recipient of the **Lieutenant Governor Scholarship** and Ethan Landry (PhD) was the recipient of the **Lieutenant Governor Indigenous Scholarship**.

Starting in 2026-27, the Ministry of Advanced Education has announced additional funding, including two additional Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor Scholarships, doubling the number of recipients moving forward.

CGPS continues to provide financial support for the **GSA–CGPS Need-Based Bursary program**, offered twice annually, and remains committed to supporting the GSA executive in delivering this important initiative.



Arianna Gibson, Vanier Recipient (SSHRC)



Jeremy Irvine, Vanier Recipient (NSERC)



Jinnath Rehana Ritu, Vanier Recipient (NSERC)



Dr. Geneveave Barbo, Governor General Gold Medallist

During Indigenous Achievement Week, doctoral student Dessa Gottfriedson (Interdisciplinary Studies, Le7 te Melámen cohort) was presented with an **Indigenous Achievement Award for Leadership** in recognition of her advocacy for equitable access to education in her community.

In October 2025, CGPS received news that the request to the Strategic Finance Committee for additional institutional funds to support graduate students was approved. We are grateful for a multi-year commitment that will result in over **\$1.3 million in new funding for graduate students** by 2028/2029, raising the minimum stipend for doctoral students to \$25,000 per year for four years in participating programs.

POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

During **National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week** (September 2025), CGPS hosted a series of events recognizing the contributions of postdoctoral scholars at USask and supporting their professional development. Programming included a virtual academic career webinar, the Annual Postdoc Reception, and a new postdoc onboarding session, offering opportunities for learning, connection, and community building.

The **2025 Misiwêskamik International Postdoctoral Fellowship** recipient Dr. Fernanda Mascarenhas (PhD) is investigating how mitochondrial dysfunction contributes to the development and progression of Alzheimer's disease, led by supervisors Dr. Ana Paula Mendes Silva and Dr. Tyler Wenzel.

The **Living Skies Postdoctoral Fellowship** program launched a new call to provide funding opportunities for transdisciplinary research supported by USask faculty and external mentors in the Signature Areas of Water, Health & Wellness, Indigenous Peoples, One Health, and Agriculture.

In 2025, Dr. Crystal Giesbrecht (PhD) received the prestigious **Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship**. Giesbrecht's work investigates types of intimate partner violence and personality traits of perpetrators in efforts to improve responses and develop more tailored approaches to case management.

CGPS introduced **Postdoctoral Fellow Excellence Awards** in 2026, to celebrate excellence in research, scholarly and artistic work by postdocs at USask, recognizing their critical role in advancing the University's mission. These awards mark an important step in strengthening institutional recognition of postdoctoral excellence at USask, and the selected awardees will be formally announced at a later date.



Dr. Fernanda Mascarenhas,
Misiwêskamik Scholar



Dessa Gottfriedson,
Indigenous Achievement
Award, Leadership



Dr. Crystal Giesbrecht,
Banting Postdoctoral
Scholar

Professional Development for Postdocs

To support postdocs with career exploration both within and beyond academia, CGPS' PD portfolio offered a range of targeted professional development opportunities for postdoctoral scholars. These sessions helped build skills in leadership, networking, and research, and assisted in preparation for academic industry and public sector roles.



Equity, Access and Mentorship

CGPS continues to support graduate students, faculty and programs to achieve academic excellence by creating flexible pathways and student centric policies and support mechanisms.

In response to changes in the graduate education landscape, CGPS conducted a review of admissions policies. Following consultation, revisions were approved by CGPS Faculty Council in Spring 2025. The updates are intended to provide greater flexibility for admission committees when assessing applicants. While holistic reviews are now strongly encouraged, they are not mandatory.

Key policy updates include:

- **Graduate Certificates:** Established clear minimum admission requirements for graduate-level certificates, aligned closely with master's level entrance standards and formally documented in both the CGPS Policy Manual and the University Catalogue.
- **Graduate Certificate Laddering:** Introduced a new policy confirming that laddering from a certificate to a master's program is permitted at the academic unit's discretion. The policy outlines how certificate course credit may be applied for a master's degree and clarifies requirements related to GPS 960, tuition and fees.
- **PGD, Master's and PhD Admissions:** Revised entrance requirements by removing the 'honours' designation or four-year bachelor's degrees and clarifying that admission GPA is calculated using the most recent graded credit units (equivalent to the final two years of full-time study) at the time of application.

To support implementation, CGPS also developed a companion [**Best Practices in Graduate Admissions Guide**](#) to assist units.



Students, supervisors, and other members of the USask community attend the annual Celebrating U event



Graduate student researchers captured at the Sask Cancer Agency as part of the photoshoot for graduate recruitment efforts



CGPS staff volunteer at the 2026 USask 3MT Finals

To support student success, in collaboration with Access and Equity Services, graduate chairs, and supervisors, CGPS developed **individualized accommodation plans** for 22 master's and doctoral students in 2025–26 to support progress on non-coursework degree requirements. In addition, more than 300 graduate students received **course-based accommodations**. Associate Dean Jaswant Singh also supported more than 15 graduate students in navigating complex academic situations, including Required to Discontinue recommendations, supervisor-student conflicts, and academic appeals.

Professional development and engagement activities for graduate faculty continued throughout the year. In October 2025, Jae Morgans and Jaswant Singh delivered conflict-engagement training for graduate chairs.

The 2024-25 recipient of **Distinguished Graduate Mentor Award** was Dr. Janet Hill (PhD) from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

In recognition of outstanding service and support to graduate students at USask, Amy Hassett (M.Ed, Ed.D) from the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy was awarded the 2024-25 **Clement Employee Service Award**.

In November 2025, CGPS Graduate Mentorship Award recipients Dawn Wallin and Julia Boughner led a **Best Practices in Graduate Student Supervision workshop**, sharing mentorship strategies with early-career faculty. The April 2026 Graduate Chair Forum featured Dr. Wendy James, who provided an overview of the new Course Assessment policy and procedures scheduled for implementation in September 2027.

New policies around thesis and dissertation requirements were drafted to align with current and emerging needs of students and to provide clear guidance for students, supervisors, and advisory committee members and include a requirement to **declare use of generative AI tools** in preparation of the documents is expected to be passed at the May 28th CGPS Faculty Council meeting for fall implementation.

Much appreciation to members of the Council, CGPS Graduate Academic Affairs Committee, the Graduate Programs Committee and the Associate Deans Grad group for their input.

Interdisciplinary Studies

The Interdisciplinary Studies (InterD) program gratefully acknowledges Dr. Steven Rayan, who completed his term as Director and Graduate Chair of CGPS Interdisciplinary Studies on July 1, 2025. Dr. Monica Popa Sârghie assumed the role, continuing to advance initiatives that celebrate and strengthen interdisciplinary research.



Dr. Monica Popa Sârghie, Director of Interdisciplinary Studies

New initiatives include the **InterD Supervisor Award**, which recognizes USask faculty for excellence in supervising graduate students in the Interdisciplinary Studies program, and the **InterD Advisor Award** - honoring members of students' advisory committees who demonstrate exceptional commitment, valuable guidance, and dedicated efforts to strengthen interdisciplinary graduate research. Based on students' nominations and adjudicated by the InterD committee, this year's awards were presented to Dr. Lori Bradford and Dr. Cynthia R. Wallace (InterD Supervisor Award), Dr. Ibironke Odumosu-Ayanu and Dr. Simonne Horwitz (InterD Advisor Award).

The newly established **InterD Publication Award** provides financial support to InterD students for research publications in peer-reviewed journals that require publication fees.



2025-26 marked the inaugural year of the InterD Supervisor Award and the InterD Advisor Award



InterD students, supervisors and advisors attending the InterD Annual Symposium

The CGPS InterD program special events, embedded within the seminar requirements, included the **Interdisciplinary Studies Keynote Lecture** of Dr. Maureen G. Reed (UNESCO Chair in Biocultural diversity, sustainability, reconciliation, and renewal) entitled "Learning together, working together: A journey in transdisciplinary sustainability research".

The signature **W[InterD]ialogues** event featured Dr. Nora Dominguez, President Emeritus of the International Mentoring Association and director of the Mentoring Institute at the University of New Mexico, in an interactive dialogue focused on mentorship and developmental networks for graduate student success.

This series of events, open to the entire USask community, culminated in the **InterD Annual Symposium**, where eight interdisciplinary graduate research teams from diverse disciplines addressed today's pressing challenges for a better tomorrow in Saskatchewan, Canada and worldwide



Cousins workshop participants at red willow basket weaving workshop, led by Traditional Knowledge Keeper Lyndon J. Linklater

Indigenization and Decolonization

CGPS remains committed to fostering [an Indigenous graduate student community](#) that nurtures belonging and success and harnessing the richness of diverse viewpoints and wisdom.

In efforts to assist Indigenous students in building community, CGPS regularly hosts **Cousins Workshops** with a 'busy hands' model that encourages students to make connections through cultural and artistic activities.

2025/26 workshops included:

- Red willow basket weaving
- Sun printing in the College of Law Medicine Garden
- Virtual/in-person beading sessions
- Ribbon skirt/shirt sewing workshop
- Tufting workshop

Other Cousins meet-ups included virtual, and in-person work jams, a family movie night, sharing circles, information sessions, Turkey Bingo and more.

In 2025/26, the **Indigenous Graduate Leadership Circle** welcomed its second cohort, led by Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator Aurora Wolfe to amplify and center Indigenous student voices.

In October 2025, CGPS hosted a panel discussion with UBC Indigenous scholars Drs. Margaret Kovach, Shawn Wilson, Monty Montgomery, and PhD candidate Lindsay DuPré focused on **creating meaningful space for Indigenous graduate students**. The session also invited USask Indigenous graduate students to share their experiences as part of a study examining Indigenous graduate student support programs at Western Canadian universities.

This year, CGPS continued its **Holiday Hamper** program, providing pantry staples and sweet treats to over 20 Indigenous graduate students and their families.

According to preliminary 2025-26 data, Indigenous graduate student enrolment is up 22%, with incoming students increasing across programs.

Full details on past and ongoing Indigenization and Decolonization efforts at CGPS will be found in the 2026 ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan report.



Professional Development



InterD student and composer Paul Suchan debuts a composition inspired by climate change at TEDxUniversityofSaskatchewan 2026.



3MT 2026 finalists and judges



The Graduate Mentorship Program celebrated 19 successful students in the first cohort of the program

Graduate studies explored the edges at [TEDxUniversityofSaskatchewan 2026](#), with five graduate students taking the stage to deliver ground-breaking talks.

Falling Walls Lab Edmonton, part of an international research communication competition showcasing breakthrough ideas, featured strong USask representation in August 2025 with one graduate student and one postdoctoral scholar advancing to the finals.

This year's [USask 3MT competition](#) featured preparatory workshops and one-on-one finalist coaching. Participation was broader than ever, with new academic units represented in the preliminary round and 12 finalists competing in April. Congratulations to Biology PhD student Cassidy Waldrep, who earned first place, and went on to compete at the Western Regional Finals at the University of Regina.

The **Graduate Mentorship Program**, launched in May 2025, successfully completed its inaugural cohort with 19 PhD students matched with mentors from academia, industry, government, and entrepreneurship. Strong student demand has led to the program's expansion to include master's students in its second cohort.

The CGPS **Professional Skills Suite (ProSkills)** delivered nine in-class sessions, equipping 125 graduate students with key competencies in areas such as communication, leadership, and career planning. Two additional modules are in development, alongside efforts to expand faculty engagement with professional development programming.

CGPS delivered a range of centralized **professional development (LevelUP) workshops**, engaging nearly 150 graduate students through virtual and in-person sessions. While most workshops, particularly those focused on career preparation, were well attended. The Cultural Adjustment Series for international students (developed to replace GPS 981) was discontinued due to consistently low participation.

Professional Development (continued)

Through partnerships with the Library and Gwenna Moss Centre, CGPS supported graduate student development in research ethics, teaching, and professional skills, with more than 1,100 students completing the GPS 960 Ethics course and strong participation across teaching and certificate programs. These collaborations also contributed to broader research impact and teaching excellence, including ongoing engagement with the Undergraduate Research Journal and multiple professional development offerings.

In partnership with Edwards School of Business, CGPS PD Specialist Kenisha Blair facilitated the professional coaching of 12 graduate students by professionals who participated in the school's Executive Coaching Program.

The **Dean's Support Fund sponsorship program** that funds student-led conferences and initiatives sponsored 11 events, engaging several thousand graduate students supporting conference organizing skill development and hands-on experience.

Programming, Enrolment and Recruitment

PROGRAMMING

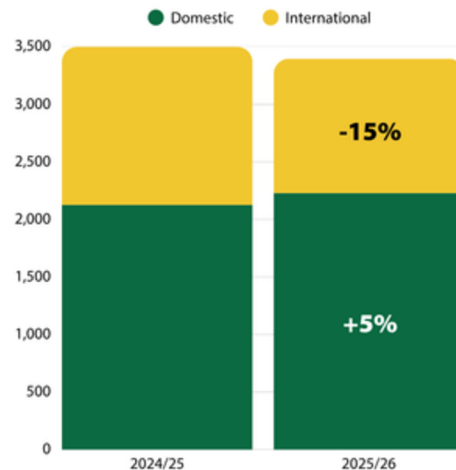
New in programming, University Council approved the Master of Science in Periodontology, the Graduate Certificate in Large Animal Veterinary Specialty Internship and the Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science. The application cycle for the Master of Occupational Therapy and Master of Speech-Language Pathology programs opened for the Fall 2026 intake with very strong application numbers (237 and 142 respectively). CGPS approved two new special case admission programs, two cotutelle doctoral programs, and three cotutelle doctoral notices of intent.

ENROLMENT

Winter census data (as of April 19, 2026) shows a 3% decline in overall graduate enrolment, driven by a 15% decrease in international students, likely a consequence of federal Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) requirements and low study permit approval rates. Domestic (+5%) and self-declared Indigenous (+22%) enrolment increased over the same period.

As of January 1, 2026, the federal government **removed the PAL requirement** for international master's and PhD students, though it remains in place for most graduate certificate and Visiting Research Students.

For full details on last year's enrolment, see the [2024-25 Graduate Student and Postdoc Scholar Report](#).



RECRUITMENT

CGPS continues to collaborate with Student Recruitment, Student Marketing and Communications, and Digital Strategy to strengthen a coordinated graduate recruitment strategy, including a series of Lunch & Learn sessions to engage programs and align efforts.

Last May, CGPS organized a photoshoot highlighting several units across campus to create a library of grad-specific brand assets. These assets supported the creation of a [grad viewbook](#) that serves as a recruitment tool for prospective students.

In the coming year, CGPS will continue developing agreements with external scholarship agencies and advancing their implementation.

CONTINUOUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

As part of ongoing efforts to enhance service to students and stakeholders, CGPS staff received training in the BIFF communication model at the annual staff retreat, facilitated by Jae Morgans.

In 2025–26, CGPS introduced monthly Graduate Administrator Forums to share policy updates, provide guidance, and address questions. The sessions saw strong attendance and engagement, and continuation of this format is being considered for the future.



*CGPS is proud to celebrate the growth and development of our team. The results of the **2025 Employee Engagement Survey** demonstrated a promising increase in overall engagement, reflecting the college's commitment to staff and students.*

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The CGPS resource allocation for operations for 2026-27 will be reduced by 0.7% and the reduced international application pressure creates significant budgetary constraints. To match rising costs, effective Fall 2025, graduate program application fees increased \$5 for domestic applicants and \$25 for international applicants. This marked the first application fee increase since Spring 2020 and positions CGPS competitively among western U15 institutions while supporting efficient application processing.

A new fee of \$20/term to defer the delivery of professional development programming for graduate students was approved and will begin to be charged in Fall 2026.

As part of fiscal sustainability measures, a valued team member position will not be replaced. Lori Lisitza served as Executive Officer for over eight years, building strong relationships and leading numerous initiatives to streamline operations; her contributions will be greatly missed, and we wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

THANK YOU TO 2025-26 COMMITTEE & COUNCIL MEMBERS!

CGPS extends its gratitude to the many individuals who served on committees this past year. Without your dedication and service, the delivery of countless awards and initiatives would not be possible.

A special thanks to the following outgoing members:

Awards & Scholarship Committee

Ajay Dalai, Chemical & Biological Engineering
Bishnu Acharya, Chemical & Biological Engineering
Gupreet Aulakh, Small Animal Clinical Sciences

Graduate Academic Affairs Committee

Elizabeth Quinlan, Sociology

Graduate Programs Committee

Ann Martin, English
Maud Ferrari, Veterinary Biomedical Sciences

Interdisciplinary Committee

Pammla Petrucka, Nursing

Nominations Committee

Valery Chirkov, Psychology and Health Studies

Postdoctoral Advisory Committee

Andrey Freywald, Pathology
Jonathan Norton, Surgery

CGPS Faculty Council

Andrei Smolyakov, Physics and Engineering Physics
Christian Willenborg, Plant Sciences
Maruti Uppalapati, Pathology
Pierre-Francois Noppen, Philosophy
Randy Kutcher, Plant Sciences
Shafiz Alam, Chemical & Biological Engineering

We'd also like to thank the following graduate students and postdocs who've served on committees this year:

Palash Roy, GSA President (CGPS Faculty Council, Executive and Coordinating Committee)
Lindsay Carlson (Awards and Scholarships)
Laila Valila (CGPS Faculty Council)
Mandela Alema (CGPS Faculty Council, Graduate Programs Committee, Graduate Academic Affairs Committee)
Ghazal Mousavian (Interdisciplinary Committee)
Cody Koloski (CGPS Faculty Council)
Dean Shameess (CGPS Faculty Council)
Gabriela Sieminska-Jauck (CGPS Faculty Council)
Jeremy Irvine (CGPS Faculty Council)
Mike Scott (CGPS Faculty Council)
Yesu Ramya Kandregula (CGPS Faculty Council)
Keigan Lloyd (CGPS Faculty Council)
Samantha Carly (CGPS Faculty Council)
Tamanna Jahan (CGPS Faculty Council, Postdoctoral Advisory Committee)
Mohammad Miah (CGPS Faculty Council, Postdoctoral Advisory Committee)
Yang Lin (Postdoctoral Advisory Committee)

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