



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

CGPS.USASK.CA

AGENDA

College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Thursday, October 2, 2025 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM

ARTS 241

Attendance & Participation

- Meetings are held in-person.
Zoom access is available by request only—please contact lori.lisitza@usask.ca if you require remote access due to illness or a 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, and you'll receive a personalized name card – this is so we can put names to faces and keep the awkward "I-know-your-face-but-not-your-name" moments to a minimum. Please leave these behind, we will use them again next time.

Voting Procedures

- Voting will be conducted by a show of hands for in-person attendees. Online participants will vote using the digital hand-raise feature.
- Some programs have multiple graduate chairs listed, 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.
-

Present:



Call to order:

Elder Roland Duquest will guide us in grounding ourselves in the land we're meeting on. 3-3:10

1. Welcome to Council (Chair)

DECISION ITEMS 3:15-3:20

2. Approval of the agenda

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the October 2, 2025, agenda as circulated.

3. Approval of the minutes

APPENDIX 1

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the May 22, 2025, minutes as circulated.

DISCUSSION 3:20-3:30

4. Director of Scholarships & Awards Services Portfolio Update – L. Johnson (5 min)

STANDING REPORTS 3:30-4:05

Dean's Written Report - D. Burshtyn (5 min)

APPENDIX 2

2024-25 College Reports

- 2025-26 College Priorities

5. Council Committee Chair's Feature

- Graduate Academic Affairs Committee– D. Burshtyn (5 min)

6. Society for Postdoctoral Scholars – T. Jahan (5 min)

7. Graduate Students' Association – R. Palash (5 min)

OTHER 4:05-4:20

8. Convocation e-Vote Process (L. Lisitza) **Delivered and voted on electronically.**

9. Questions or arising business from the floor

10. Adjournment

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

• College Bylaws	Oct 2-6	Convocation e-Vote (distributed via USask email)
• Council Archives	Oct 6	Fall Scholarships & Awards Call Distribution
• Facts & Figures	Oct 21	Conflict Engagement Workshop w/Jae Morgans
	Oct 30	Graduate Faculty Council



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MINUTES

College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Graduate Faculty Council Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2025 | 3:00 – 4:30 pm

ARTS 241

The format of faculty council meetings for the remainder of the 23/24 academic year is changing to have an emphasis on members attending in person.

- Zoom links will only be distributed upon request made to lori.lisitza@usask.ca in case you are travelling or are working from a remote location.
 - Voting will be done by a show of hands (in person) and via a digital show of hands for those online.
 - A reminder that if you are representing a program (typically graduate chairs) and cannot attend please send a delegate.
 - Meeting material: [Meeting Package Link](#)
 - [Council Archives](#)
-

Present: Britney Bergermann, Peter Slade, Scott Widenmaier, Ryan Brook, James Benson, Ian McQuillan, Lori McKee, Laureen McIntyre, Jing Xiao, Ann Martin, Fan Yang, Supratim Ghosh, Alec Aitken, Monica Sarghie, Leonzo Barreno, Dani Brittain, Chris Soteros, Fang Xiang Wu, Wanda Martin, Roy Dobson, Sasha Koustav, Thomas Warkentin, Tim Jardine, Maarten Voordouw, Susan Detmer, Paul Jones, Mark Eramian, Christian Willenborg, Shafiq Alam, Randy Kutcher, Lingling Jin, David Ohene-Amoako, Nate Ort, Dean Shamess, Cody Koloski, Tamanna Jahan, Vicki Squires, Saija Kontulainen, Louise Racine, Jim Robson, Jaswant Singh, Debby Burshtyn, Angela Jaime, Karim Tharani, Amy Hassett, Irene Schwalm, Linda Nemeth

Call to order: 3:02 PM

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

SPECIAL GUESTS [3-3:20](#)

Interim Vice-Provost, Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio and VP Research, Dr. Baljit Singh will bring brief updates and have a few moments to answer a few questions that were provided in advance.

Drs. Bruni-Bossio and Singh brought greetings from the respective offices and provided council brief updates. No questions were raised.

KELLY CLEMENT MEMORIAL AWARD [3:20-3:30](#)

Shakiba Jala 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 2024 awardee is Amy Hassett (JSGS). Congratulations Amy.



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DECISION ITEMS 3:30-4

1. Approval of the agenda

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the May 22, 2025, agenda as circulated.

Brook/Benson CARRIED

2. Approval of the minutes

APPENDIX 1

Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the March 27, 2025, minutes as circulated.

Jones/Eramian CARRIED

3. PPM Section 20 – Degree-Level Competencies

APPENDIX 2

Notice of Motion: Graduate Faculty Council approves the PPM Section 20 Degree-Level Competencies as proposed.

Associate Dean Singh provided background on the proposed CGPS changes to Section 20.

- The Program requirements piece was approved by Council on March 27. The next section before Council today lays out the competencies for degrees aligned to provincial and national standards
- Dr. Singh presented several slides and highlighted some of the key areas including *breadth of knowledge, knowledge of methodologies*.
- Consultation has been extensive beginning in May of 2024 and several iterations have been made. Thank you to Chelsea Smith from CGPS who has done significant heavy lifting to keep this business on track.
- Dean Burshtyn noted that last week she presented the proposed competency framework to Dean's Council who were enthusiastic around this in concept and appreciation that these competencies resonated with what they would like to see students knowing and being able to do at the end of the degrees. Questions were raised about implementation and how we would operationalize.

Dean Burshtyn opened the floor for discussion.

- *Overall members were supportive of implementation. Questions were presented about how CGPS would support implementation and what that would look for graduate chairs and programs.* Dean Burshtyn noted that implementation would take some time as next steps would need to include mapping current degrees to competencies and do a gap analysis. CGPS will resources this exercise.
- In parallel additional work is being done, like refreshing the GPS960 (ethics), incorporating professional development withing programming (ProSkills training modules), etc.
- *A member asked about research design involving Indigenous communities – noting that it wasn't clear if this was in relation to the field of student, relevant for only those doing community based-research, or everyone.* Dean Burshtyn noted that this was a foundational concept but could make further clarifications as to what the expectation would be with disciplinary considerations. Consultation with OVPIE would be essential on the phrasing.



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- *A member noted about the aspirational nature competencies and thought this framework was well-structured and leaves some room for interpretation which is good because specificity would make things too restrictive.*
- *A member asked how CGPS would support teaching components of the PhD framework.* Dean Burshtyn noted that teaching experience could be in the form of peer to peer and in non-classroom settings and/or could include reflections on teachings. It is not feasible for all PhD students to be guaranteed sessional experience.
- *Questions on the next steps.* Dean Burshtyn noted that further consultation (University Council and committees, OVPIE, programs) and development of mapping tools would be prioritized.

The proposal will go back to GAAC to incorporate the feedback and then sent to Council virtually with a request for e-vote to avoid turnover in Council membership (on July 1). There were no objections to this approach

4. Progress Report (GPS 210)

APPENDIX 3

For Endorsement: Graduate Faculty Council endorses the progress report recommendation as proposed.

Marc Usunier presented the progress report form recently developed and accepted for endorsement at the last GAAC meeting in May. This form is an update to the GPS 210 form, and with the Banner 9 upgrade and functionality allows this to be completed and uploaded into progress reports as a pdf. The units can continue to use their form as long as the incorporation student progress information - that clearly communicates the student progress and enables CGPS to support units that need to move to a probationary status or RTD.

Members were supportive of a form and noted several edits to the form as presented. The fundamental need for a range of progress markers was noted as essential. Dean Burshtyn noted that a revised copy would be brought back to council this fall after GAAC does some more work on this.

5. Slate of nominations for CGPS committee fulfillment 2025-26 [L. McIntyre]

APPENDIX 4

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 UNANIMOUS

Dr. McIntyre presented the slate of CGPS committee nominations as listed in Appendix 4 noting that there were still a few vacancies and are still looking to fill a few vacancies. Overall the Nominations Committee had a successful spring campaign and thanked the outgoing and incoming members for their support.

VERBAL REPORTS 4-4:20

6. Dean's Update— D. Burshtyn (10 min)



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Dean Burshtyn has appended an in-depth annual (Appendix 5 and 6). In addition she made several comments that included:

- 3MT Finals was held in April and had a great turnout – congrats to Kathryn Avery from Mechanical Engineering who won this years finals and represented USask at UVic in May.
- USask will participate in the Falling Walls Lab at UofA. We will be promoting to postdocs and working with those who are interested in participating.
- Attended Edward's Business Summit, focussed on AI; provided input on what AI skills employers will be looking for in graduates.
- InterD ran their Spring 990 symposium in an engaging Ted talk style.
- We have renewed two MOAs (Library and Gwenna Moss - Teaching Innovation). The funding is provided by CGPS to deliver GPS courses.
- Dean Burshtyn recognized the work of all the committee members, graduate chairs and various partners this year and a round of applause was given.

7. Society for Postdoctoral Scholars – T. Jahan (5 min) Verbal report unavailable due to technical issues.

8. Graduate Students' Association –D. Ohene-Amoako (5 min)

David provided an overview of the GSAs activity this past academic year highlighting a few big events that had great student turnout including the Gala in April. The new executive has started, with a byelection running now in search of the GSA's next president and VP Indigenous. David thanked the council for their support over the past year.

Welcome to the incoming executive	Thank you to the outgoing executive
President –	President – David Ohene-Amoako
VP Finance & Operations – Lindsay Carlson	VP Finance & Operations – Lindsay Carlson
VP Academic & Student Affairs –Mandela Alema	VP Academic & Student Affairs – Nickson Joseph
VP External Affairs – Biraj Saha	VP External Affairs – Reza Golpayegani
VP Indigenous Engagement –	VP Indigenous Engagement – Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko

FOR INFORMATION

- 9. COLLEGE'S ANNUAL REPORT
- 10. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS
- 11. CONVOCATION E-VOTE RESULTS
- 12. THESIS AWARDS RESULTS

APPENDIX 5
APPENDIX 6
APPENDIX 7
APPENDIX 8

Dean Burshtyn provided a few short comments regarding Appendix 5 thru 8 including reading out the names for the Thesis Awards and congratulating them and their supervisors for their outstanding work.



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13. Questions or arising business from the floor.

A member asked about Stats help at the Library - they offered that the folks from Stats be involved. Dean Burshtyn acknowledged this comment and clarified that the Library doesn't have adequate coverage for stats help at the grad level, and if there is an opportunity to work with the stats program to fill this gap may be ideal.

A member asked about the Convocation e-vote and if this would be the approach going forward – noting that low turnout may be related to inbox volume. It was noted that e-voting for convo would be indeed the path forward, and messaging will be targeted directly to voting council members.

14. Adjournment/ McIntyre



Appendix 2

Welcome CGPS Faculty Council to the 2025/26 academic year. It is an honor and a privilege to begin a second term as dean. I am committed to providing strong and sensitive leadership during this period of significant changes and pressure for the postsecondary landscape including generative AI, the economic and political upheaval that surrounds us and the need to address big societal and environmental areas. The CGPS leadership team is embarking on a multiyear planning project for CGPS intended to feed into the strategic plan to be developed under the incoming President Bruni-Bossio. I look forward to engaging discussions as we consult with our various stakeholder groups. Attached to this report is the CGPS annual priorities for the range of portfolios within the college.

Accolades

The **2025 Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship** was awarded to **Dr. Crystal Giesbrecht**. **Dr. Fernanda Mascarenhas** was awarded the USask Misiwêskamik Fellowship. [Story released during Postdoc Appreciation Week.](#)

USask was highly successful in the final competition for **Vanier Scholarships**. The 2025 recipients: **Arianna Gibson** (Clinical Psychology) investigating the parenting experiences of people with borderline personality disorder. **Jeremy Irvine** (Plant Sciences) studies the lesser clover leaf weevil and is a passionate advocate for Indigenous scholars. **Jinnath Rehana Ritu**, (Biology) investigating a neurotoxin effects on learning and memory.

In 2025, a total of 20 USask doctoral students received CGSR-D Scholarships (including 1 CIHR, 10 NSERC, and 5 SSHRC awards), while 49 Tri-Agency Master's students were also awarded scholarships. To view the names of the recipients and major internal scholarships please visit our [webpage](#).

Thulani Hewavithana a PhD student from Computer Science was awarded the **Lieutenant Governor Scholarship**. **Ethan Landry** a PhD student from the Civil Engineering received the **Lieutenant Governor Indigenous Scholarship**.

Huskies Academic All Canadian Athletes: Justin Ball, Katley Joseph, Julia Tregobov, McKenna Bolger, Kira Comfort, Anna Oliver, Jake Neufeld, Sean Lockerbie, Jaira Cross Child, and Quintan Fast.

Three Minute Thesis (**3MT®**) finalist **Kathryn Avery** (Mechanical Engineering) earned first place at our 3MT finals in April and represented USask at the Western Regional finals in Victoria this past spring.

Dr. Apurva Sinha (Chemistry) and doctoral student **Mariel Bonilla-Revelo** (Food Science) advanced to the Berlin [Falling Walls Lab Edmonton](#) competition finals August 27.

Student and Postdoc Cocurricular Experience

Aurora Wolfe, [Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator](#), launched the *Cousins Stitching Stories* project with support from òyateki funding and a partnership between the CGPS and OVPIE. The project was designed to foster a sense of belonging and community among Indigenous graduate students. Each hexagon in the handmade quilt represents an Indigenous student and their academic program, symbolizing both individuality and collective strength. Through the creative and cultural practice of quilt-making, students came together to share stories, build connections, and support one another on their academic journeys.

September 15-19 marked National [Postdoc](#) Appreciation Week. CGPS hosted a well-attended panel discussion on launching an academic career as well as hosted a celebratory reception. Appreciation to graduate faculty members Maureen Reed (SENS) and Jeffrey McDonnell (GIWS) for serving as panellists.

Since its launch last fall, [the LevelUP Dashboard](#) has been gaining strong momentum among graduate students and postdocs. Developed by CGPS, this user-friendly platform provides easy access to a wide range of professional development resources, including self-paced learning modules and in-person workshops tailored to support academic and career success.

CGPS recently launched a new [Mentorship Program](#), designed to foster meaningful connections between graduate students, postdocs, and experienced mentors. This initiative aims to enhance personal and professional growth through guided support, shared experiences, and career insights. To date we have matched 20 mentees with USask Alumni.

Supports and Professional Development for Faculty

Under the leadership of Associate Dean Singh, CGPS contributed to onboarding of new faculty in conjunction with the [DARE program](#) providing resources on mentorship and an introduction to CGPS.

Each term, Dr. Singh facilitates interactive workshops focused on **conflict engagement** and **best practices in graduate supervision**. These sessions emphasize a hands-on approach to learning and skill-building. Upcoming workshop topic is *conflict engagement*, facilitated by Jae Morgan on October 21st – [register here](#).

Program Management

CGPS welcomed **Dr. Monica Sarghie** into the Director of Interdisciplinary Studies role July 1, 2025, for a three-year term. The program accepted 9 new students for fall term 2025 (including one deferral).

Overall enrolment remains fairly stable despite a challenging year globally. While international applications for programs beginning in the 2025/2026 academic year fell by 47%, domestic applications increased by 26%. Despite the decline in applications, for most programs there was a large pool of highly qualified international applicants to offer admission.

Enrolment trends are also reassuring given our context. Overall graduate enrolment is down by 2% as of September 15. The drop in international enrolment (12% overall) has been offset by growth in domestic enrolment (4% overall). Much of the domestic enrolment growth is due to new programming and seat expansions aligned with the provincial health and human resources expansion.

To ensure CGPS continues to be able to process international admissions as efficiently as possible we have reintegrated the international credential evaluation process from TLSE to the CGPS Program Services team to resource the added PAL and IRCC verification steps now required.

Applications for programs beginning Fall 2026 and Winter 2027 opened September 17th. The new application fee rates (\$125 for domestic applicants and \$145 for international applicants) also took effect on this date.

A centralized, graduate-focused recruitment response is underway. A cross-functional working group was formed to align centralized recruitment efforts and maximize impact. This group brings together USask's recruitment team (Teaching and Learning), the AVP/CCO and subject matter experts within the Service Team and the Digital Strategy team (University Relations), and senior leadership from CGPS including the Dean, Senior Director Graduate Student Services and Executive Officer.

In support of these centralized efforts, the group is developing practical materials and tools to also assist units who engage in in-house recruitment activities. These supports were launched in September through a series of lunch and learns and featured grad focused branding, emerging templates in a new shared software platform, web presence, templates, digital advertising and the soon to be released graduate viewbook.

Student Funding

The past year marked a significant expansion in scholarship opportunities, with the launch of several new awards including \$100,000 increase to support the recruitment of Indigenous graduate students.

On September 9, the Scholarships & Awards Team hosted a Tri-Agency doctoral scholarship workshop attended by over 200 students. With the introduction of the harmonized approach this year, we anticipate a significantly larger pool of applicants.

The new CGPS Awards HUB is scheduled to launch October 6. The new platform modernizes every step of graduate centrally funded scholarship and awards process, making it easier for students to find and apply for funding and more efficient for administrators to manage and track awards.



2025-26 CGPS Priorities

Public

Recruitment and Funding	Transformative Decolonization Leading to Reconciliation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New scholarship application system• Improve Tri-Agency success while adapting to changes for doctoral scholarships• Establish and coordinate a cohesive recruitment integration strategy• Address Recruit CRM gaps in the student lifecycle response• Optimize endowed funds for student support	<p>Provide community framework and wrap-around supports for graduate students in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ recruitment and admissions○ program progression○ post program career success (alumni networks)
Program Innovation	Improve Student and Postdoc Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Champion Interdisciplinarity through incubator, partnership and network building• Operationalize degree-level competencies starting with program-mapping• Support Generative AI literacy for students and postdocs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uplift postdoc success through robust onboarding and ongoing support• Develop regularized suite of PD offerings for postdocs• Review/refresh ethics training
Exceptional Service	Advocacy & Advancement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and update faculty membership policies and processes• Develop suite of graduate faculty focused training• Service standards - evaluation & metrics development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a donor relationship strategy• <i>Leverage alumni relationship for mentorship program</i>



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ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2025

Graduate students and postdoctoral scholars are central to the university's research mission, driving innovation, discovery, and artistic excellence or training as future professionals. Their contributions enhance research across disciplines and strengthen the university's global impact. Over the past year, CGPS responded to external changes in the graduate student landscape. While certain changes were positive, such as the increase in federal scholarship programs and new programs developed to address the Human Health Resource needs of the province, others required we take strategic action to minimize impacts. The report highlights these activities, student accomplishments and select initiatives CGPS undertook to foster a collaborative and supported graduate community.



The **Governor General's Gold Medal** recognizes outstanding academic achievement at both fall and spring convocation ceremonies.

Above: Dr. Jaris Swidrovich Fall 2024 Recipient (PhD, Education, Supervisor: S. Murphy)



The **Lieutenant Governor Indigenous Scholarship** is a prestigious Provincial award that supports Indigenous scholars pursuing advanced studies in Saskatchewan.

Above: Jeremy Irvine Spring 2024 Recipient (M.Sc., Plant Sciences, Supervisor S. Prager)

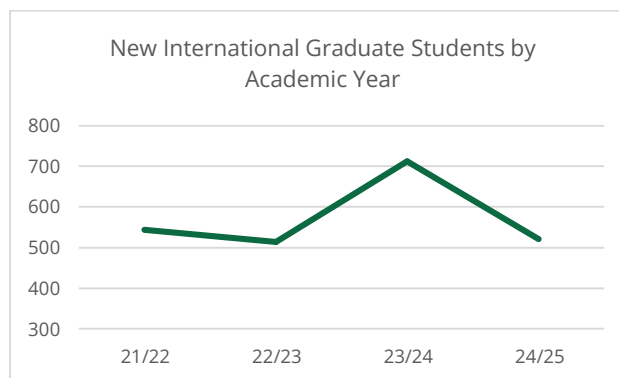
Adaptable.

Mitigating impact of study permit caps

At the time of this report, international applications to graduate programs were down by 51% partially offset by an increase in domestic applications (+ 26%).

A **drop-off in application pressure** from many countries this year is likely due to the introduction of PALS. While early trends still indicate a large pool of highly qualified international applicants, at the time of writing this report, offers to international students dropped relative to last year by 14% (135 offers) offset by 52 more offers to domestic students. We are closely monitoring the rates that these applicants are accepting their offers and introducing new touchpoints to encourage students to come to USask.

Overall, graduate enrollment remains stable, with a slight dip in new international students in the current year, bringing us back to numbers similar to prior years.



CGPS proactively adapted to the new Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) requirement for international graduate students to apply for study permits. We worked with deans and departments for a transparent way to allocate and track the graduate PAL quota that was implemented as soon as the quota was provided and supported programs [with information](#).

To ensure CGPS processes international admissions as efficiently as possible we:

- Improved turnaround times by reintegrating international credential evaluation from TLSE to within the CGPS program services team.
- Increased admissions staff resources to cover the added steps for PALS and offer verification.
- CGPS is providing stronger leadership for graduate-targeted activity by Student Recruitment (TLSE). With UR, developing new recruitment resources such as a graduate viewbook for use abroad and templates for programs to produce recruitment material.

We invest resources to promote our reputation in different countries and to develop international agreements that bring sponsored students. The first student under a recent Filipino government agreement will arrive later this year. Last fall, CGPS participated in a delegation to Sao Paolo, Brazil. In March, the VPR went to Vietnam in conjunction with a Government of Saskatchewan delegation with other provincial PSE institutions where he met many prospective graduate students.

Celebrating researchers and improving financial supports

The 2024/25 academic year marks a significant expansion in scholarship opportunities, with the launch of several new awards: [Heather Lukey Graduate Student Bursary](#), several new donor-funded scholarships including the Mehr, Kalagnanam, and aligned with Institutional priorities, [10 Indigenous recruitment awards](#) were created with a \$100,000 increase to the scholarship institutional funds.

In January 2025, CGPS held its first scholarship recipient reception and welcomed a full house in recognition of academic excellence. The names of major scholarship recipients are curated on the CGPS website. In 2024, three outstanding PhD students were awarded Vanier Scholarships - Krishna Kolen (CIHR), Morgan Flemming (NSERC) and Gwen Rose (SSHRC). In the final year of the Vanier and Banting programs, USask will receive three more Vanier awards (names embargoed at the time of this report).

We are very encouraged by the long overdue increases and changes to the Tri-Agency funding for research trainees.

- New values of \$27,000 for master's and \$40,000 for doctoral provided an additional \$1M for the 100 recipients with active awards.
- International students eligible for doctoral funding and an additional 1200 doctoral awards added for this year.

IMPROVEMENTS FOR POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS

We welcomed the increase and harmonization of Tri-Agency postdoctoral fellowships at \$70,000/annum.

As part of Postdoctoral Scholar Appreciation Week (Sept 2024), CGPS provided two well-attended career planning panel discussions and hosted a windup reception, celebrating the contributions of postdoctoral scholars.

The 2024 **Misiwêskamik International Postdoctoral Fellowship** recipient Salvador Osuna Caballero is working on a project funded by Genome Canada called ACTIVATE, led by Dr. Kirstin Bett and Dr. Curtis Pozniak (PhD). The goal of the project is to reduce synthetic fertilizer use and greenhouse gas emissions by developing more resilient crop varieties.

A refreshed [website](#) houses many new initiatives for postdocs this past year including:

- The Society of Postdoctoral Scholars established travel awards using their budget provided by CGPS.
- Creation of a new MS Teams channel where postdocs can directly communicate with each other.
- A dedicated section was created in the CGPS newsletter.
- First entrants to Falling Walls Edmonton Lab with Albin Joseph (PDF, Mechanical Engineering) and Priyanka Tirumareddy (PhD student, Chemical and Biological Engineering) travel to Edmonton for the finals.

Flexible.

PEDAGOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

In Feb 2025, a panel discussion on Reimaging Arts Graduate Programs catalyzed by a recent book coauthored by Dr. Loleen Berdahl provided a forum to improve student outcomes and challenge the graduate education/training status quo in response to our country's evolving needs.



CGPS improved the college's annual [Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Scholar Report](#) with enrolment demographics and measures of student progress. The 2023/24 year saw a 14% increase in student applications, increases in entrance GPAs across all degree types, and continued enrollment growth concentrated in Master's course and project programs. Self-declared Indigenous student enrollment was at 9% overall – significant growth at the PhD level (+ 27%) but a slight decline in Master's thesis programs (- 2%).

New in programming, University Council approved the Master of Public Health Nursing, Master of Occupational Therapy, Master of Speech Language Pathology, Certificate in Financial Management and the restructuring of JSGS certificates. The MPAS program admission cycle opened for fall 2025 starts with very strong application pressure.

To provide a more student-centred, EDI-informed and up-to-date approach to providing access and laddering into graduate credentials, CGPS Faculty Council approved admission policy updates (See PPM [Section 1](#)).

Certificates were incorporated into the Credential Descriptions and further work is underway to transform the former Degree Level Learning Outcomes to align with the frameworks for national and USask competencies.

NEW INITIATIVES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

To promote dynamic interdisciplinary studies, CGPS and the College of Education have established an MOU for collaboration between the SOTL Centre and CGPS's InterD program enriching research and training.

The InterD program took an open and innovative Ted-talk style approach to their seminar requirement showcasing nine students whose work intertwined diverse disciplines, reshaping how we approach critical questions and advancing new perspectives in research.

Supporting USask's graduate supervisors and graduate chairs is a high priority for CGPS. Initiatives this year focused on improved communication and effectiveness and included:

- Graduate Program Guidelines [template](#) provided for programs (Nov 2024)
- Workshops on Emotional Intelligence (April 2025) and Conflict Management (October 2024) were attended by over 70 graduate faculty participants.

- Collaboration with the [DARE](#) program in support of new faculty onboarding (Oct 2024).
- Responding to the ever-shifting abilities of generative AI and various disciplinary needs, CGPS requested graduate programs to include [GenAI guidance](#) in their program guidelines based on the principle of transparency in usage.

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 the **Stitching Stories project** designed by CGPS' Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator, [Aurora Wolfe](#) and supported by local knowledge keeper Gabrielle Lee, a third-generation Cree Métis quilter from Pelican Lake, students and staff created a hexagon quilt with each piece representing a USask Indigenous graduate student and their discipline. The quilt is now on display by the CGPS office.



A swatch of the Stitching Stories quilt coming together.



Aurora featured above wearing the porcelain teacup jacket she created as part of her MFA **coyote dreams of easy prey**.



Other new initiatives launched in 2024/25:

- Refreshing our unique Cousins brand to capture our Indigenous graduate student community-building approach.
- Holiday Rations project (Dec 2024): pantry items delivered to >40 student families as far away as Rankin Inlet and Northern Manitoba. Thanks to the *oyateki* Partnership and Saskatoon Coop for their sponsorship.
- Establishing a routine of start-of-term info sessions for Indigenous graduate students, sessions with undergraduate students (ISAP) and visits to high schools.
- Hosting tailored scholarship application workshops.

The [Grad HUB](#), a premier resource at USask, provides onboarding support for graduate students. A range of onboarding sessions—both virtual and by invitation—engaging over 600 new students in 2024/25. The Virtual Spring Welcome is designed to help students navigate the Grad HUB platform.

The CGPS sponsorship program that funds [student-led conferences](#) and initiatives sponsored 14 events, engaging several thousand graduate students supporting conference organizing skill development and hands-on experience.

CGPS increased efforts to create smoother career transitions for graduate students and PDFs with:

- The new [LevelUp](#) dashboard launched Sep 2024.
- The [Beyond the Professoriate](#) platform, renewed Feb 2024, granting free access to career transition materials and the annual career symposium.
- A [mentorship program](#) connecting current students with outside mentors launched in May 2025 with incredible interest from students – 50 applicants for just 20 spots. The program leveraged the relationships established through the [PhD Alumni Study](#).

In conjunction with our flagship event, the [Three Minute Thesis \(3MT\) Finals](#) (Apr 2025), CGPS provided a formative experience for participants through a series of workshops on presentation skills, audience engagement, and the art of condensing complex ideas into a concise three-minute talk.

This was my last chance to be on stage as a PhD student. The 3MT was a great experience. I'm incredibly grateful for this chance, it was an unforgettable experience that I will always cherish.

really struggled during the first year of my Master's, and the 3MT ended up being a turning point. It was the first time my

communication skills felt truly validated, and that experience opened the door to so many meaningful connections and opportunities. It also deepened my love for my project and confirmed that grad school was the right path for me. So thank you again for the incredible effort you put into making the 3MT happen—my grad school journey would look very different without it.



CGPS staff were on deck to volunteer and support the competitors at the 3MT Finals (Apr 2025).



3MT finalists (Apr 2025) with Judges Chelsea Cunningham, Bram Noble, and Joelena Leader.





UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

College of Graduate
and Postdoctoral Studies

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STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

MAY 2025

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Executive Committee

Committee Composition

Geraldine Balzer (Scholarships & Awards), Mark Eramian (Graduate Programs), Paul Jones (Postdoc Advisory), Laureen McIntyre (Nominations), Steven Rayan (InterD), Debby Burshtyn (Dean and Chair of GAAC), Jaswant Singh, David Ohene-Amoako (GSA President), Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko (GSA VP Indigenous) and Maria Rodriguez (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

As a standing committee of CGPS Council, the Awards Committee reviews and adjudicates applications for scholarships and graduate thesis awards. Committee membership is chosen to provide representation across disciplines in alignment with the tri-council funding streams. Externally-funded competitions include the Vanier Scholarship; CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC Doctoral; and Tri-Agency Canada Graduate Scholarships – Master's. Internally funded competitions include the CGPS Teacher-Doctoral Fellowship, Dean's Scholarship, Indigenous Graduate Leadership Award, and various thesis awards.

Committee Composition

Geraldine Balzer (Chair), Saeed Moshiri, Bill Bigetu, Neeraj Dhar, Bichnu Acharya, Gupreet Aulakh, Ajay Dalai, Ahmed Mostafa, Andrew Leask, Ahmed Mostafa, Ellen Wasan, and a GSA student representative). Other faculty members were invited to serve on the committee, as needed.

Highlights

Highlights of the new work overseen by the awards committee in 2024-2025 follows.

- Approved the change to the awarded amounts for the Robert P. Knowles Scholarship
- Shifted in the Governor General Gold Medal from one to two competitions/year

- Made policy changes related to funding, the most notable being the change to the definition of a major award
- Approved the Terms of Reference for a new Tri Agency sub committee
- Revised adjudication processes to the Tri Agency competitions
- Adjudicated two new scholarships: Heather R. Lukey and Indigenous Graduate Student Recruitment

In addition to providing oversight and guidance on policies and procedures, the committee also contributed to the adjudication of many graduate scholarships and awards. The main centrally administered programs are highlighted below:

Teacher-Scholar Doctoral Fellowships

The Teacher-Scholar Doctoral Fellowships provide an annual stipend of approximately \$20,000 and a mentored teaching experience, which is made possible by partnerships with other graduate units and the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning. Fourteen doctoral students across campus received this Fellowship in 2024/25.

Dean's Scholarship Program

In May 2023, the Dean's Doctoral Scholarship program replaced the old Dean's Scholarship Program. This newer program is structured to incentivize outstanding doctoral research in three areas:

- Recruitment: attract top quality USask master's students into our doctoral programs
- Attrition: allow high achieving doctoral students to focus on their thesis research
- Institutional impact: incentivize high calibre applications to the Tri-Agencies.

Doctoral students who have applied for a CGS-D, recommended to the national competition but were not funded, are automatically considered for the Dean's Doctoral Scholarships for Domestic Students. Scholarships are \$24,000/ year for two years. As of the beginning of May 2025, all Tri Agency doctoral decisions have been made and the committee was able to select the 2025 Dean's Doctoral Scholarships for Domestic Students recipients.



Ten International students were awarded a Dean’s Doctoral Scholarships for International Students in the winter of 2025. Scholarship amounts are \$24,000/year for two years. Up until 2025, the Dean’s Doctoral for International students was a separate competition which followed similar requirements to that of the Tri Agency’s doctoral application. Moving into the new 2025/26 year, a separate competition is no longer required. With the recent Tri-Agency harmonization changes, international students can now apply for the Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral program. Dean’s International recipients can now be adjudicated and selected in the same manner as the Dean’s Domestic.

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 \$25,000 per year for up to 4 years and the Master’s awards are valued at \$20,000 plus tuition per year for up to 2 years. In 2024/2025 the committee awarded 10 awards (3 doctoral and 7 Master’s).

Indigenous Graduate Student Recruitment Scholarship

The Indigenous Graduate Student Recruitment Scholarship which had its inaugural launch in 2025 provides additional funds to support units in their recruitment strategies. Units nominate eligible students after an offer of admission is made but before the student begins their program. In 2025, CGPS was able to provide \$10,000 scholarships to 10 new Indigenous students from programs and departments such as Indigenous Studies, SENS, CHEP, SPP, School of Rehabilitation Sciences, and Educational Psychology & Special Education.

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

USask was awarded \$827,000.00 in SIOS funding for the 2024/25 year. This funding helped support a few targeted initiatives. CGPS continued to use a large portion as top-ups for national award holders and to recognize excellence and innovation of those

exceptional students whose applications competed in a Tri Agency Vanier program. CGPS also created a new opportunity to fund Master’s students with projects supporting one of USask’s signature areas.

New Faculty Graduate Student Support Program

The CGPS administers 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. In January 2025, the program was put on hold because of ongoing consultations surrounding new terms of reference. In the interim, eligible faculty were still encouraged to apply for an award if they had a student ready to start a program. When launching this spring, the updated terms will also reflect this new process which will allow CGPS to better oversee the use of funds. In 2024/25, 18 new tenure-track faculty across campus were provided funding for new Master’s students (\$16,000 each) and PhD students (\$20,000 each).

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 work load and provided a wider range of subject matter expertise. The Awards Committee added another measure in assisting doctoral applicants by allowing those moving to national to make editorial changes to their applications. The table below provides a summary of Tri-Agency activity in 2024-2025.

Award	Applications	Quota	Successful
Tri-Agency (CGS-M)	152	49	49
Vanier	30	11	3
CIHR (CGS-D)	12	3	1
NSERC (CGS- D & PGS-D)	37	20	11
SSHRC (CGS-D & Fellowships)	49	21	7



Reimaging Graduate Funding

A CGPS 75th Anniversary Recruitment Scholarship fund was also established to enable units to recruit top masters and doctoral talent to USask. Annual allocations are calculated by leveraging Tri-Agency success from both the supervisor and graduate student perspectives. This funding model has now gone through two full fiscal years and CGPS continues to adapt and modify processes around reporting to best suit the needs of units. Approximately \$7.5 million is available to support students through the 75th Anniversary Recruitment Scholarship and Student Support Fund (SSF) funding arrangements. 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, assistantship, top-ups, etc.).

Conclusions and observations of the committee Chair

The CGPS Awards Committee demands significant time and dedication from its members. Committee members must familiarize themselves with the selection criteria for each award, including the major tri-agency awards, which span various disciplines. Despite these differences, the need for objective decision-making remains consistent across all awards. The considerable effort of each Awards Committee member in adjudicating awards deserves commendation.

It is particularly noteworthy that each member demonstrates a genuine interest in ensuring scholarships and awards are administered properly and ethically, prioritizing the best interests of students, departments, and donors.

The 2024/25 academic year brought many changes to the Graduate Scholarships and Awards portfolio. Geraldine Balzer, who had previously served as Co-Chair, stepped into the role of Chair for the first time. Leah Johnson, who joined CGPS in the spring of 2024, has completed her first full fiscal year and is eager to collaborate with the new Chair and committee to implement further changes to better support both committee members and applicants. In the spring of 2025, the portfolio underwent a restructure in response to the evolving graduate awards landscape and new strategic focus, welcoming Graduate Awards Officers Nicole Doll and Clarence Mararagan.

As we move into the 2025-2026 academic year, the Awards Committee can anticipate additional changes aimed at enhancing our processes. We were fortunate to have several dedicated faculty members join the committee to adjudicate some Tri-Agency competitions. A debrief meeting with these faculty members resulted in several actionable items, including a revised rubric to assist with rankings and the formation of a new Tri-Agency subcommittee. This subcommittee will help distribute the workload; however, with recent changes to the Tri-Agency doctoral program, institutions can expect higher volumes of applications, necessitating more reviewers. I hope the Awards Committee will continue to contribute their expertise and collaborate with the newly formed subcommittee.

Additionally, we are excited to introduce Blackbaud, an awards management tool. The CGPS team will implement this tool over the summer, aiming for a fall rollout to the campus community. The committee will benefit from Blackbaud's built-in reviewer features.

Finally, at the end of each academic year, we convene to discuss process issues. We will do this again soon (date TBD). From this meeting, we will identify additional recommendations and incorporate them into this report.

Graduate Programs Committee

The Graduate Programs Committee is a standing committee of CGPS Graduate Faculty Council. The committee approves new programs, program modifications, new course proposals, and course modifications. The committee meets twice per month from September 1 – January 31 and once per month from February – June. The committee increased meeting frequency this academic year to address a growth in the volume of proposal submissions.

Committee Composition

Michael Cottrell (on sabbatical), Anas El-Aneed, Mark Eramian (Chair), Maud Ferrari, Heather Heavin, Nickson Joseph (GSA Representative), Ann Martin, Laureen McIntyre, Jaswant Singh, Jian Yang. Administrative Support: Chelsea Smith



COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

NEW & REPLACEMENT PROGRAMS

This academic year, the Graduate Programs Committee approved eight new programs and two replacement programs.

New programs:

- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Financial Management
- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Public Administration
- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Public Policy Research
- Master of Public Health Nursing
- Master of Occupational Therapy
- Master of Speech-Language Pathology
- Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Periodontology*
- Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Veterinary Pathology (project-based)

Replacement programs:

- Master of Physical Therapy
- Master of Nursing – Nurse Practitioner

** curricular approval processes not complete (APC and University Council approval outstanding)*

PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS

This academic year, the committee approved changes to 42 programs. The changes for 18 of these programs required further academic approval through the governance processes.

Changes to Admissions Qualifications

- Master of Nursing – Thesis-based
- Master of Nursing – Course-based (Professional Practice)
- Master of Nursing – Nurse Practitioner
- Nursing Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) - Non-Direct Entry
- Foundations for Registered Nurse Specialty Practice Graduate Certificate
- Master of Physician Assistant Studies

Program Terminations

- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Economic Analysis for Public Policy
- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Public Management
- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) Public Policy Analysis

- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Science and Innovation Policy
- Public Policy Transfer from Master's to PhD
- Master of Veterinary Science (M.Vet.Sc.) – Project-based
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Nursing Direct Entry admission pathway

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.

- Master of Business Administration
- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert.) in Leadership
- Juris Doctor (J.D.) and Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) Combined Degree
- Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) and Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) Combined Degree Program
- Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Chemistry
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Chemistry - Non-Direct Entry
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Chemistry - Direct Entry
- Transfer from Master's to Ph.D. in Chemistry
- Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Civil Engineering
- Transfer from Master's to PhD in Civil Engineering
- Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Educational Psychology and Special Education – Special Education Stream
- Master of Arts (M.A.) in English – thesis-based
- Master of Arts (M.A.) in English – project-based
- Transfer from M.A. to Ph.D. in English
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in English
- Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Kinesiology
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Kinesiology – Non-Direct Entry
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Kinesiology – Direct Entry
- Transfer from Master's to PhD in Kinesiology
- Master of Physician Assistant Studies
- Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Precision Oral and Systemic Health



- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Precision Oral and Systemic Health – Non-Direct Entry
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Precision Oral and Systemic Health – Direct Entry
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Psychology – Clinical Stream
- Transfer from Master's to PhD in Psychology – Clinical Stream
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Psychology - Applied Social Stream
- Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Environment and Sustainability
- Master of Water Security (M.W.S)
- Graduate Certificate (G.Cert) in Sustainable Solutions
- Master of Arts (M.A.) in Women's, Gender and Sexualities Studies

HIGHLIGHTS

Master of Occupational Therapy and Master of Speech-Language Pathology

These new degree programs will address the urgent need to train Saskatchewan-based students at USask and meet a growing demand for Occupational Therapy and Speech-Language Pathology practitioners in the province. Each program will admit 40 new students each year; the first student intake will be September 2026.

Master of Public Health Nursing

This new degree program will advance bachelor-prepared Registered Nurses to fill leadership roles in population and public health. This innovative program will be administered and coordinated by the College of Nursing, with courses and thesis supervision shared across the College of Nursing and the School of Public Health

New courses

GPC approved 112 new courses, 79 of which were approved as part of new and replacement programs. 33 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 121 course modifications, including 3 course deletions.

GPC SUMMARY

College/School	New/Replacement programs	Program Changes/Terminations	New Courses	Course Modifications
Agriculture and Bioresources	0	0	1	26
Arts and Science	0	12	19	15
Dentistry	1	3	15	0
Education	0	1	0	9
Edwards School of Business	1	4	3	11
Engineering	0	2	2	0
School of Environment and Sustainability	0	3	1	48
Kinesiology	0	4	0	0
Law	0	0	0	0
Medicine	0	1	5	4
Nursing	3	1	13	2
Pharmacy and Nutrition	0	0	1	0
School of Rehabilitation Science	3	0	51	0
School of Public Health	0	0	0	3
Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy	2	5	0	2
Veterinary Medicine	1	1	1	1

Graduate Academic Affairs Committee

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

Committee Composition

Jen Amarualik-Yaremko (GSA consulting member), Ryan Brook, Debby Burshtyn (Dean, CGPS and Chair), Lynn Lemisko, Erique Lukong (Vice-Chair), Nickson Joseph



(GSA), Elizabeth Quinlan, Joe Rubin, Jaswant Singh, and Stella Spriet. Administrative Support: Chelsea Smith

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Policy development

The Graduate Academic Affairs Committee reviewed and recommended 13 policy revisions to CGPS Council.

Policy	GAAC Approval
Section 1. Minimum Entrance Requirements and Application Requirements	
1.2. Graduate Level Certificate Entrance Requirements	18-Dec-25
1.3. Postgraduate diploma entrance requirements	18-Dec-25
1.4. Master's entrance requirements	18-Dec-25
1.4.1. Laddering of graduate certificates into course- or project-based master's degrees	18-Dec-25
1.5. Doctoral entrance requirements	18-Dec-25
1.6. Entry to a Doctoral degree without a Master's degree	18-Dec-25
1.13. Application deadlines	18-Dec-25
Section 2. Admission Decisions	
2.1. Academic Unit Responsibility	18-Dec-25
2.4. Offers of Admission	18-Dec-25
2.4.1. Admission with Conditions	18-Dec-25
2.4.2. Admission Deferrals	18-Dec-25
2.4.4. Negative Admission Decisions	18-Dec-25
Section 20. Degree-Level Expectations	19-Mar-25
20.1 Credential Description	19-Mar-25
20.2 Degree Competencies	8-May-25

Under Review

Discussion about ongoing work on campus, including CGPS policy revisions were discussed, including:

- Degree Competencies**
As part of the revisions to Degree-Level Expectations the committee is reviewing and providing formative feedback on new graduate degree competencies. These competencies build on USask competencies and reflect Canadian Degree Level Standards to better signify the full scope of competencies needed in researchers of today.
- Ethics Courses Review:**
The committee provided feedback on the initial work CGPS undertaken to review ethics training for graduate students via the GPS 960 course. The review, focused on keeping with current

and emerging needs in the research ethics space, will be brought back to the committee for further feedback.

- Role of the Cognate member on PhD advisory committees**
The committee continues to review the need for cognate members, assumptions about the role, and practices for both departmentalized and non-departmentalized colleges.
- Progress Report template revisions**
Formative feedback provided on a new Progress Report form to better support units in assessing the progress of their graduate students.
- Research proposals and Doctoral Candidacy Assessment**
Discussion around the dissertation proposal being considered a required step within doctoral candidacy assessment, as well as timing of the doctoral candidacy assessment.

Interdisciplinary Studies Committee

Committee Composition

Dean Chamberlain, Azita Haddadi, Kathryn Labell, Ghazal Mousavian (Student Rep) Pammla Petrucka, Marica Sarghie (T2), David Zhang (T1), Steven Rayan (Director, InterD Programming and Chair), Aurora Wolfe (CGPS consulting member) Luis Corredor Duarte (Administrative support)

OVERVIEW

The Committee continues to be responsible for maintaining an active and vibrant graduate program in Interdisciplinary Studies. The 2024-25 period marked an important milestone in the history of collaborations fostered by the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Program through the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the School of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) on December 13, 2024. This agreement will facilitate collaborative admissions exercises between the programs, the possibility of developing SoTL/InterD postdoctoral fellowship opportunities, and access to the SoTL space by InterD students.

A significant highlight during this period was Joel Bernbaum's PhD defense which was attended by members of the wider community (including the Mayor of Saskatoon), and an external examiner, Dr. Selina Busby of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. This event



not only celebrated academic achievement but also fostered meaningful dialogue across sectors and prompted opportunities for future collaborations. During their stay, Dr. Busby delivered a well-received talk to students and InterD faculty on the intersection of theatre and urban planning, enriching academic discourse and inspiring cross-disciplinary engagement.

The Committee was also very pleased to welcome new members, Dr. Dean Chamberlain, Dr. Azita Haddadi, Dr. Monica Sarghie, and Aurora Wolfe. Likewise, the committee extends their gratitude to Ghazal Mousavian for serving a second term as the InterD student representative.

We also would like to highlight the success of InterD students under important graduate scholarships and awards during the 2024-2025 period: Lindsey Boechler (Vanier SSHRC), April Mackey (Deans' Scholarship), Ghazal Mousavian (Dean's Scholarship), Alexandria Pavelich (CGSD3, SSHRC) and Paul Suchan (Dean's Scholarship).

Student Numbers, Admissions, Defences, and Awards

As of the time of this report, there are **29 students** in the Interdisciplinary Studies program: 1 in the MA program, and 28 in the PhD program. The program is currently utilizing the expertise of **21 faculty supervisors**.

One of the tasks the Committee engages in each year is the review of applications for admission to our program. Over the course of the 2024-2025 academic year, we have admitted **four new students – three at the PhD level and one at the MA level**. One began their PhD studies in Fall 2024, one began their master's studies in Fall 2024, one began their PhD studies in Winter 2025, and one will begin their PhD studies in Fall 2025. We thank the members of the Committee for their time and expertise in reviewing applications, many of which are complex, multi-layered and lengthy.

Over the course of the 2024-25 period, four defences took place, all successfully: we congratulate **Joel Bernbaum (PhD), Pamela Buttinger (PhD), Jocelyn Peltier-Huntley (PhD), and Elly Cockcroft (MA)** and send our best wishes for their future endeavours!

INTD 990 Events

Our INTD 990 activities have consisted of two major events: the W[InterD]ialogues discussion session and the InterD Annual Student Symposium. Due to logistical considerations and with the goal of expanding the INTD 990 activity offerings to the Fall term, the InterD Keynote Lecture is slated to convene in Fall 2025.

- **W[InterD]ialogues (March 19):** We welcomed our program's community to the 7th panel in a series designed to showcase interdisciplinary research and interdisciplinary scholars at various stages of their academic journeys. This year's panel featured **Dr. Dionne Pohler** (Associate Professor, Edwards School of Business and the Co-operative Retailing System Chair in Co-operative Governance at the Canadian Centre for the Study of Co-operatives and the Johson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy) and **Dr. Maggie Fitzgerald** (Assistant Professor, Political Studies). The panelists shared their experiences as interdisciplinary researchers, spoke about their challenges and successes as well as the misconceptions they sometimes face in their academic trajectory. The event was well attended with both an in-person and online audience. We thank Melanie Hamilton of the Centre for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for allowing us to host the event in the SoTL Centre.
- **InterD Annual Student Symposium:** On April 29th, 2025 the InterD program launched its first InterD Annual Student Symposium in a TEDx format with 9 presenters. The event was hosted at the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre and attracted an audience of around 35 attendees which included InterD students, faculty members, and other members of the USask community. Presenters received useful feedback and intriguing questions from their peers, supervisors and members of the Interdisciplinary Studies Committee. We are grateful to Aurora Wolfe for moderating the event!



InterD Streams

At the moment, several new “streams” or “concentrations” embedded within the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program are being cultivated. These include an Interdisciplinary MSc focus on Quantum Innovation, one of the University’s newest Signature Areas of Research. Others may include programming attached to the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), the Ron and Jane Graham School of Professional Development in the College of Engineering, and Drama within the School for the Arts. These streams, at various stages of development, will provide the rapid delivery of highly topical and timely programs of study attached to signature areas, emerging themes of interest, and community-engaged / public-facing work. A successful model for the development of such streams is the Le7 te Melamen cohort on 10 InterD doctoral students working on healing and the development of counselling methodologies in the aftermath of the intergenerational trauma of residential schools.

We look forward to reporting further progress in the creation of these streams in the near future.

Finally, we thank our returning and departing colleagues on the Committee for their dedication to the Interdisciplinary Studies Program and the promotion of interdisciplinarity in general on this campus. If any faculty are interested in serving on this exciting committee, we encourage you to reach out to us to discuss the workings of the Interdisciplinary Graduate program and the role that the committee plays in promoting interdisciplinarity in general on campus.

Postdoctoral Advisory Committee

Committee Composition

Paul Jones (Chair), Josephine Chelshe (SPS) *Term1*, Tamanna Akter Jahan (SPS *Term 2*, Jaswant Singh, Meghna Ramaswamy, Andrew Freywalk, Jonathan Norton, Meena Sakharkar, Erika Dyck, Steve Milsosavljevic, Eugene Adjei (Postdoc rep), Kenisha Blair-Walcott (CGPS PD consulting member), Luis Corredor Duarte (Administrative support)

Year in Review

The Postdoctoral Advisory Committee marked its eighth year of operation during the 2024-2025 year. The committee remained committed to providing support and expert advice on initiatives launched by the Society

of Postdoctoral Scholars (SPS). Likewise, the committee served as a platform to disseminate the diverse range of Professional Development activities and events available to postdoctoral fellows as well as an opportunity to share updates from members.

The committee notes with great appreciation the contributions of Josephine Chelshe as director of the SPS until she stepped down from that role in January of 2025. Josephine was central to getting SPS up and running and to developing their current governance structure. Josephine’s role in SPS and on the committee were taken up by Tamanna Akter Jahan, the new director of SPS.

Key priorities discussed and supported by the committee included:

- Development, launch and adjudication of the inaugural SPS student travel awards, led by SPS. The committee provided guidance on institutional support, funding and logistics.
- Continued support for the second edition of the SPS student travel awards, including recommendations regarding the selection process and composition of the adjudication committee.
- The creation and approval of the PDF Excellence award, an initiative led and brought forward by the chair of the Postdoctoral Advisory committee. This item included the discussion of the draft document prior to being circulated with CGPS Executive Committee.
- Discussion and review of the Terms of Reference of the PDF Excellence Award.
- Updates from CGPS on administrative and non-administrative items including Professional Development initiatives, the streamlining of procedures affecting the postdoctoral appointment process, and the coordination of the USask endorsement process for the final edition of the Banting call and the misiwiskamik International Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- Updates from SPS, including the process and outcomes of the election of their Executive Committee members.



Regarding new members, Eugene Adjei was appointed as postdoctoral representative at the committee, for the 2024-2025 period.

In September 2024, the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies hosted the National Postdoc Appreciation Week. The week featured a variety of professional development events, an onboarding session for new postdocs, and a reception celebrating the USask postdoctoral community. All events were well attended and positively received. A listing of other professional development activities is provided below.

Professional Development Initiatives

The following professional development opportunities were offered to postdocs during the 2024-2025 academic year.

- Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurship Workshop and Coaching Session – October 2024
- Interview Skills Workshop and Mock Interviews (2 cohorts – Fall and Winter)
- Postdoc Appreciation Week – September 2024
 - 2 Panel Discussions
 - Launching an Academic Career Panel Discussion
 - The Job Search and Transition Beyond Academic Panel Discussion
 - Annual Postdoc Appreciation Reception and Networking event
- Graduate and Postdoctoral Development Network (GPDN) Virtual Career Symposium – attended by over 60 postdocs and graduate students – November 2024
- Falling Walls Research Communication Competition – 1 Postdoctoral scholar advanced to the finals of the this very competitive international event on groundbreaking, innovative and impactful works of early career researchers – September 2024
- Beyond the Professorate (BtP) Webinars e.g. a) Communicating your Skills to Employers, b) Where to Find the Hidden Job Market

- BtP Virtual Career Conference – May 14-20, 2025
- Other External Partnered Opportunities – Canadian Neuroscience Seminar Postdoctoral Series and the Postdoctoral Scholars Leadership Certification (McMaster University), How to Overcome Imposter Syndrome and Build Resiliency as Postdocs

Postdocs also continue to access other CGPS PD supports delivered by our campus partners such as the GPS 986: Teaching Preparation Certificate.

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), Kiven Erique Lukong, Noelle Rohatinsky, Valery Chirkov, Chris Zhang, Debby Burshtyn, Jaswant Singh

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.

On April 8th, 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 2025-26 cycle a total of 17 new committee members are being recommended.

Across the ecosystem of CGPS' governance, there are a total of 171 voting members. The Nominations committee manages approximately 25% of total voting seats.

At the time of writing this report, recruitment of three outstanding vacancies is still underway (2 Awards, 1 GAAC).

