

***“Connecting with the World”***  
**The International Blueprint for Action 2025**  
**– A Vision for a Globally Significant University**

## Preamble

The founders of the University of Saskatchewan in 1907 envisioned *“a world-class university at the edge of a swift flowing river surrounded by vast prairies.”*<sup>1</sup> In 2002, President Peter MacKinnon in *‘Renewing the Dream’*<sup>2</sup> articulated the determination for the U of S to be counted amongst the most distinguished universities in Canada and the world, recognizing that *“In the new global environment our competition for faculty, students and research support is international..., our obligations and opportunities are also international.”* Recently, President Peter Stoicheff highlighted our objective *“to be nationally and internationally recognized as a distinguished university dedicated to research excellence”*, and *“a welcoming place for students, educators and researchers from around the world.”* This bold vision for the University, built upon a history of accomplishment for nearly 110 years, inspires our belief that academic excellence, partnered with international engagement and activity, will enhance our student experience, heighten the impact of our research, and fortify our presence as a globally influential university.

Through the extensive and varied contributions of its faculty, staff, students, the University of Saskatchewan has made significant strides in international engagement. Embracing a diverse student body, the university currently has one of the highest numbers and percentages of international graduate students, and offers opportunities for students and faculty to learn and engage in all regions of the globe. Committed to strengthening global impact through worldwide networks in areas of research strength, the university has more than 110 international memoranda of understanding and 270 international research and development projects with institutions in more than 60 countries, and we continue to attract distinguished international researchers. We are poised to build on this success by welcoming the world to our University and presenting our University to the global community as a world-class academic institution.

Global problems cannot be solved by only thinking and acting locally. Moreover, the world is evolving, and so is the University of Saskatchewan. The University of Saskatchewan is well-positioned to contribute to the global needs of our society, and we will prepare our students, faculty and staff to appreciate, ask, and then address society’s most important challenges. Our academic excellence, partnered with international engagement and activity, will secure our global presence and enhance the University’s impact in the world in which we live and share.

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Saskatchewan, to hold an ‘honourable place among the best’ as our founding president, Walter Murray, envisioned.

<sup>2</sup> *Renewing the Dream*, page 2.

## The International Blueprint for Action

The internationalization of the academy has never been more important. Students are more globally mobile than ever before. Government expectations are increasingly linked to international benchmarks and standards. Intercultural competence is a highly valued skill enhancing employability in today's global economy. International partnerships are now essential in order to address some of the world's most pressing problems.

Internationalization can therefore be viewed as a bridge of academic and scholarly interchange leading to highways of opportunity. The University of Saskatchewan recognizes that internationalization will improve the quality of teaching, learning and discovery at our institution. We also recognize this will be facilitated by internationalizing learning experiences, diversifying our university community, strengthening our global impact through discovery, and growing our global citizenship and international community service.

Our students must be globally competent and prepared for our vast and changing world. They must be able to experience, appreciate and understand varying cultures, and communicate effectively in different settings and environments. For many, these international experiences will be life-changing.

Diversifying our university community will best position our faculty and staff to support international engagement, and therefore ensure the well-being and success of our international students, and similarly help our students succeed when they study abroad.

International research partnerships will enable our University to increase engagement and collaboration, address complex global challenges, and ensure that our innovation and discovery are recognized around the world.

The University of Saskatchewan is resolved to acquire and share knowledge in the service of society, and become distinguished as a globally influential and engaged academic institution. We will collaboratively engage in community service and outreach that supports the quality of life for people and communities around the world in our aspiration to be the university the world needs.

The University Plan 2025 highlights the importance of interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to discovery, indigenization, teaching and learning, and community engagement. The International Blueprint for Action 2025 amplifies the University Plan by focusing and enhancing our efforts across these same themes through an internationalization strategy and goals distinctive of a truly world-class university. The strong linkage between the key threads of the University Plan and key themes of the International Blueprint is highlighted through the four key pillars of the strategy:

1. Internationalizing Learning Experiences;
2. Diversifying our University Community;
3. Strengthening our Global Impact through Discovery; and
4. Growing our Global Citizenship and International Community Service.

## **Key Pillar #1: Internationalizing Learning Experiences**

A hallmark of a world-class university is student learning that offers international learning opportunities aimed at developing informed global citizens. Internationalizing our learning experiences is about providing diverse international opportunities for students, both inside and outside the classroom. Through proactive support of colleges/schools, administrative units, student groups and individual students, the University of Saskatchewan opens the door for greater and equitable participation of students in educational experiences outside of Canada. We also enable increased intercultural understanding through inclusion of cross-cultural perspectives within the U of S curriculum and high impact co-curricular activities that foster intercultural understanding and enhanced feelings of belonging.

### **Objective:**

**1.1 Increase the proportion of U of S students who engage in education abroad, enabling them to experience new places, cultures, languages and traditions.**

### **Actions:**

- 1. Support accessible, diverse college/school-level education abroad experiences that engage student academic interest:**
  - a) leverage existing partnerships and programs to improve student participation
  - b) identify and develop new partnerships and opportunities leading to programming that fits flexibly within degree requirements
  - c) identify and develop new and existing partnerships and opportunities that engage First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students
  
- 2. Increase student awareness of the benefits of participation and opportunities in education abroad experiences:**
  - a) provide high-impact opportunities for students to share their education abroad experiences
  - b) explore mechanisms and opportunities for formal recognition of degree-based study abroad activity
  - c) enhance marketing of the benefits of education abroad and available U of S opportunities
  
- 3. Ensure financial, administrative and curricular infrastructure is in place to enable equitable student participation in international learning experiences:**
  - a) ensure adequate administrative support resources are available in colleges and central units
  - b) remove barriers (where possible) associated with program distribution and residency requirements
  - c) streamline and expand transfer credit recognition, and create pre-approved pathways with partners as part of exchange and transfer/articulation agreements
  - d) improve funding to address students' financial barriers to participation in degree-credit study abroad
  - e) develop strategies to retain students in the post-application period

**Objective:**

**1.2 Enhance international and cross-cultural perspectives in content and learning in the curriculum.**

**Actions:**

- 4. Provide support to academic units and individual faculty to build international and cross-cultural content, associated learning outcomes, and effective teaching strategies:**
  - a) undertake program-based curriculum renewal efforts to maximize opportunities for strengthening international and cross-cultural content and learning outcomes
  - b) identify and support individual faculty interests in this area
  
- 5. Increase the number of international visiting faculty who engage with students in learning and research environments:**
  - a) explore, develop and promote a robust approach to increased faculty-student interaction
  
- 6. Build awareness of courses with international and cross-cultural content:**
  - a) develop an inventory of current courses with international and cross-cultural content, including courses with international Indigenous perspectives
  - b) identify these course offerings utilizing registration system attributes, and promote the value of taking courses with international and cross-cultural content

**Objective:**

**1.3 Optimize participation in co-curricular activities that are inclusive and foster intercultural understanding.**

**Actions:**

- 7. Strengthen existing and create new extracurricular opportunities, characterized by involvement of both domestic and international students, which foster inclusion and intercultural understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, and current realities, and an appreciation of their many contributions in local, provincial, national, and international contexts:**
  - a) provide financial, space, and human resources to university units (college/school or central), students and student groups to deliver extracurricular activities
  - b) develop opportunities for institution-wide celebration
  
- 8. Enhance awareness of opportunities that foster inclusivity and intercultural understanding:**
  - a) create an inventory of student participation in U of S extracurricular activities of an international and/or intercultural nature
  - b) improve mechanisms to promote extracurricular activities

**By 2025, we will have:**

1. Increased the percentage of students participating in education abroad by 35%, and the percentage of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students participating in education abroad by 50%
2. Increased the number of visiting international faculty that are actively engaged with student learning or research by 35%
3. Inventoried courses with international and cross-cultural content, including courses with international Indigenous perspectives, and established baseline participation data
4. Increased the number of courses with international and cross-cultural content by 10%
5. Inventoried the number of extracurricular activities that foster intercultural understanding, and established baseline participation data
6. Selected and implemented an assessment tool (or set of tools) to measure students' global citizenship and intercultural learning outcomes, and their satisfaction with participation in international learning experiences.

## ***Key Pillar #2: Diversifying our University Community***

A diverse and inclusive university community fosters an enriched learning environment, characterized by global connections and enhanced intercultural understanding where members feel a strong sense of belonging. The University of Saskatchewan will continue to grow the size and diversity of the international student body. As we do this, we will focus on strategies that support the well-being and success of these students. Similarly, as we seek to diversify the university community, we acknowledge the importance of ensuring that faculty and staff are best positioned to support international engagement.

### **Objective:**

#### **2.1 Grow the size and diversity of the U of S international student body.**

#### **Actions:**

- 1. Build capacity and opportunity for increasing international undergraduate and graduate student degree-credit enrolment:**
  - a) establish college-specific international student enrolment targets for undergraduate and graduate students that are aligned with the university's strategic enrolment activities
  - b) ensure student recruitment resources and initiatives are matched to available program capacity and enrolment priorities
  - c) develop additional academic programming designed to attract different populations of international students:
    - academic/English language bridging programs aligned with student demand
    - targeted distance education programming
    - short-term summer and special interest programming
  - d) explore the feasibility of new models to deliver U of S degree-level programming outside of Canada.
  
- 2. Address barriers to attracting a diverse international student body:**
  - a) implement a relationship management system to improve communication, enhance processes, and increase efficiency for all stakeholders
  - b) offer new targeted international student awards and work-study program funding in support of international enrolment goals, while sustaining current levels of scholarship funding.
  
- 3. Leverage external partnerships to support international recruitment priorities:**
  - a) mobilize and maintain an active alumni network in key geographic regions where student recruitment opportunities are sought
  - b) capitalize on government, business and industry partnerships and initiatives
  - c) transform education agent management practices to align with enrolment priorities, and ensure consistency and quality of representation.

### **Objective:**

#### **2.2 Support the well-being and success of our international students.**

**Action:**

- 4. Build on existing and innovate new strategies and support systems to improve student completion rates, achieve and sustain high levels of satisfaction in learning and cultural experiences, and create a sense of inclusion at the university and within our communities:**
  - a) enhance academic and English language supports
  - b) improve access to and quality of on-campus housing and enhanced information about off-campus housing
  - c) ensure adequate resources for academic and non-academic international student advising, and for supports to meet student needs and regulatory requirements
  - d) facilitate engagement of all campus stakeholders in efforts that increase international student involvement and leadership in academic and non-academic aspects of university life
  - e) strengthen existing and create new pathways for international students to connect with community-based settlement supports, and their own cultural and linguistic communities on- and off-campus.

**Objective:**

**2.3 Increase the ability and confidence of faculty and staff to support international and intercultural engagement and activities.**

**Action:**

- 5. Design and recruit a faculty complement that reflects the diversity of our university community:**
  - a) review and implement college/unit faculty complement plans, and recruitment, to ensure diversity is recognized.
- 6. Support international exchange and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff both at home and abroad:**
  - a) offer professional development in diversity, inclusion, and intercultural awareness to faculty and staff
  - b) support exchange and international professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

**By 2025, we will have:**

1. Increased the proportion of degree-seeking international undergraduate students to 10%
2. Sustained the proportion of degree-seeking international graduate students at 32%
3. Developed additional academic programming designed to attract different groups of international students
4. Established targets for graduation and time to completion for international undergraduate and graduate students
5. Increased the proportion of faculty and staff with diversity and inclusion training by 20%
6. Regularly benchmarked U of S international student satisfaction survey results with our peers
7. Selected and implemented an assessment tool (or set of tools) to measure international students' satisfaction in the U of S learning environment, and their sense of inclusion at the university
8. Achieved faculty diversity relative to the mean benchmark of our U15 colleagues.

## ***Key Pillar #3: Strengthening our Global Impact through Discovery***

The University of Saskatchewan has a long and successful history of global engagement in research and discovery. Further enhancing our international research presence will provide greater opportunities for our faculty and students to access international facilities, funding, knowledge and expertise, as well as leverage our research output and impact, thus significantly increasing our capabilities to address global challenges. We will work to build our capacity to collaborate and engage internationally, contribute to research that addresses complex global challenges, and ensure our innovative ideas and new discoveries are renowned around the world.

### **Objective:**

#### **3.1 Enhance our success as a world leader in research.**

### **Actions:**

- 1. Increase the number, diversity and impact of international research partnerships:**
  - a) support new collaborative strategic research relationships with leading global institutions
  - b) streamline data gathering and decision support tools to better enable identification of promising new partnerships, and the value of existing research partnerships
  - c) establish an International Research Partnership Fund to facilitate strengthened research collaborations with existing partners
  - d) establish a Global Innovation Fund<sup>3</sup> to stimulate and support new research collaboration in priority regions
  - e) fund ‘Global Signature Workshops’, for faculty and research trainees from partner institutions and the U of S, to meet and address global challenges
  - f) explore the establishment of innovative joint research facilities with high-level institutional partners
  - g) promote innovation, solution development, and applications arising from international research.
  
- 2. Strengthen supports to increase international research collaborations:**
  - a) establish a campus-wide information repository of international research activity and opportunities
  - b) develop professional development and peer mentoring for faculty and academic units to enable the establishment and the strengthening of international research linkages
  - c) enhance international research services support available to faculty, centrally and in Colleges and Centres, to facilitate participation in international research activities.
  - d) establish a Global Ambassador Program to enhance collaboration in existing and emerging areas of research strength and innovation, by supporting U of S researchers and their students to travel to global institutions, and/or external faculty and experts to visit the U of S.

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<sup>3</sup> The Global Innovation Fund is intended to stimulate innovative partnership and support multilateral research collaboration to address global challenges in areas of U of S strength and emerging strength, and in markets that align with provincial priorities. Two grants/year of up to \$100,000 to support the development of new partners will be awarded. Two grants/year of up to \$50,000 will be provided to support ongoing joint activities with existing strategic partners and to leverage funding.

**3. Attract leading international researchers to our university:**

- a) appoint high-profile International Research Chairs and faculty, jointly at both the U of S and a strategic partner institution
- b) establish International Visiting Professorships at the U of S
- c) engage alumni and our communities to support the establishment of U of S International Research Chairs.

**4. Recognize and celebrate success in international research:**

- a) increase the number of Global Research Leadership Awards<sup>4</sup> available to faculty, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students
- b) award additional Distinguished Professor<sup>5</sup> designations to recognize notable international achievements
- c) develop a Student Certificate to recognize participation in international research
- d) establish an award acknowledging staff (including research scientists) achievement and participation in international activity
- e) recognize international research activity in faculty promotion and merit standards.

**Objective:**

**3.2 Showcase understanding of U of S research capabilities, discoveries and achievements.**

**Action:**

**5. Inform our local and global audiences of U of S research achievements and impact:**

- a) develop and implement a connected strategy to effectively share with the world the relevance and impact of U of S research
- b) encourage participation of U of S faculty, students and staff in international meetings, conferences and other related venues.

**By 2025, we will have:**

1. Increased external international research funding by 20%
2. Increased the proportion of international co-authored publications to the average of U15 universities
3. Increased the number of media articles/items featuring international initiatives by the U of S
4. Developed College and School and selected Country international profiles
5. Developed a campus-wide information repository of international research activity and opportunities
6. Established two International Research Chairs
7. Sponsored and held seven Global Signature Workshops.

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<sup>4</sup> Two \$1000 Global Research Leadership Awards will be given each year in recognition of outstanding international research leadership.

<sup>5</sup> The Distinguished Professor designation is conferred by the U of S to faculty in recognition of their achievements in research, scholarly and artistic work.

## **Key Pillar #4: Growing our Global Citizenship and International Community Service**

The University of Saskatchewan is committed to enhancing the supply and sustainability of global water, energy, and food supplies, as well as to promoting the health and the protection of our environment. In undertaking these efforts, the U of S is resolved to acquiring and sharing knowledge in the service of society, and becoming distinguished as a globally influential and engaged academic institution. A strong bond between the University of Saskatchewan and society is vital and beneficial to both: society benefits from the application of knowledge derived by our University, and our University benefits by the experiential learning and connections that come from generating and utilizing this knowledge, and bringing it back to the learning environment.

### **Objective:**

#### **4.1 Use our expertise to address global challenges and support the well-being of communities around the world.**

### **Actions:**

- 1. Collaborate to share and build our knowledge, skills, tools, and technologies with communities around the world:**
  - a) support conferences and encourage participation of our students, faculty and staff in international meetings and events that focus on the well-being of communities around the world
  - b) encourage Colleges and Centres to incorporate international research participation and achievements in their community engagement activities
  - c) establish a regular U of S 'Supporting the Well-Being of Communities Around The World' conference
  - d) support and reward students, faculty and staff participation and leadership in international initiatives which support the health and well-being of communities around the world.
  
- 2. Increase awareness and communication that our university is addressing global challenges to support the well-being of all communities around the world:**
  - a) increase awareness and communication regarding new knowledge and contributions of the U of S to enhancing the supply and sustainability of global water, energy, and food supplies, and in promoting our health and protecting the environment
  - b) increase awareness and communication regarding new knowledge and contributions of the U of S in enhancing the well-being of indigenous communities that has been achieved through constructive and collaborative partnerships, research, projects, and initiatives with those communities.
  - c) provide targeted funding to support U of S participation and leadership in international networks of indigenous peoples.

### **Objective:**

#### **4.2 Engage in community service and outreach that stems from and is responsive to authentic and respectful conversations with international peoples and communities to support the welfare and quality of life.**

## Actions

- 3. Develop and mentor graduates, faculty and staff with a practiced commitment to active international citizenship:**
  - a) encourage and reward students, faculty and staff to offer their knowledge for the service of society, and to participate in and influence global conversations
  - b) develop a campus-wide repository to inform our students, faculty and staff of global community service and development activities
  - c) improve methods to track faculty and staff international travel, activities, and contributions
  - d) enable participation in global community service and outreach activities.
  
- 4. Enhance awareness of the University's commitment to be a globally engaged and connected academic institution:**
  - a) by working together with international communities to publicize the University's connectivity and engagement commitment, capabilities and achievements in internal and external communications.
  
- 5. Leverage our community of globally-minded alumni, partners, and supporters in the University's commitment to international people and communities:**
  - a) develop and implement a strengthened international alumni engagement plan
  - b) increase charitable giving participation with the U of S from international alumni
  - c) build a repository of alumni, partner and external communities' international expertise, networks and experiences; and utilize the expertise and learnings in U of S international activities
  - d) establish international alumni mentoring experiences.
  
- 6. Promote and engage in distinct intercultural experiences and the cultural diversity of our community:**
  - a) increase awareness of on- and off-campus cultural events such as International Food Fair, International Education Week, International Research Month, Folkfest, and others
  - b) work with our partners and external communities to explore the development of entities such as a 'Newcomer's Centre' or an 'International Visitors Centre'.

## By 2025, we will have:

1. Developed a centralized campus-wide repository of international community service opportunities, activities, and contributions.
2. Implemented a campus-wide system to effectively document University faculty and staff international travel
3. Reviewed, and revised as necessary, faculty promotion and merit standards to appropriately reflect the value of global citizenship and international community service to the University
4. Organized an annual U of S 'Supporting the Well-Being of Communities around the World' conference
5. Increased external international development funding by 25% from the baseline 3-yr annual mean.
6. Establish a co-curricular designation on student records related to international community service.