

JUNE 11, 2021

Volume 28, Issue 10



USASK PRIDE

In this edition of *On Campus News*, we take a look at what the campus community is doing to celebrate USask Pride Week in a virtual environment.

While events, education and celebration activities in support of the 2SLGBTQ+ community will again be largely focused online this year due to the ongoing pandemic, there are a number of engagement opportunities, digital exhibits and virtual panel discussions scheduled for the university's Pride Week from June 14-19.

SEE PAGE 2

— 3 —

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

— 6 - 17 —

SPRING CONVOCATION

— 20 —

MRI IN SPACE

On Campus News is published 12 times per year by University of Saskatchewan Marketing and Communications. It is distributed to all USask faculty, staff, graduate students and members of governing bodies, as well as to others in the university community, related organizations, some Saskatchewan government officials and news media. Subscriptions are available for \$24 per year. Story and photo ideas are welcome. Advertising rates are available online or on request.

On Campus News aims to provide a forum for the sharing of timely news, information and feature stories about people and events of interest to the USask community.

We acknowledge we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

EDITOR

James Shewaga

WRITERS

Shannon Boklaschuk, Megan Evans, Jenna Fraser, John Grainger, Lynne Gunville, Meagan Hinthner, Donella Hoffman, Kieran Kobitz, Lauryn Kronick, Brett Makulowich, Emilie Neudorf, Chris Putnam, James Shewaga, Alyssa Wiebe, Amanda Woroniuk.

DESIGNER

Pierre Wilkinson

ISSN: 1195-7654

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40065156

Return undeliverable addresses to:

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS
G16 THORVALDSON BUILDING
110 SCIENCE PLACE
SASKATOON, SK S7N 5C9

Email: news@usask.ca

USask to celebrate virtual Pride Week

✍ LAURYN KRONICK

One year after Pride activities went online due to the pandemic, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) continues to find creative ways of celebrating the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

The USask campus community will come together virtually during Pride Week from June 14-19 with a range of activities to educate, commemorate and celebrate.

“During Pride, take the time to get educated, connect with OUTSaskatoon, learn more about pronouns, or read about the history of queer Saskatoon,” said Dr. Simonne Horwitz (PhD), USask associate professor in history and co-chair of the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Gender and Sexual Diversity. “If you are watching events from your device, reach out to queer

community members and learn about intersectional issues. This is a really positive way you can mark the week and a remarkable way of celebrating.”

Despite the shift to remote operations, the Provost’s Advisory Committee proceeded with its work on the university’s queer housing project in the College Quarter Residence, which launched in 2019. USask continues to sell Pride merchandise to raise funds for this project and community members can make an online donation as well.

Horwitz explained that the committee is also working to create queer student lounges within the residences where 2SLGBTQ+ students can hang out and access a library of queer materials. The committee would also like to

reinstate their dessert and speaker series once the safe return to campus takes place, which is an opportunity for intergenerational queer community building.

“We want to work toward that when we get back, where we can share space and build a queer community that spans age and generation on campus,” she said.

In recognition of Pride Week, the Pride flag will be flown on campus from June 14-19. Tune in to the Saskatoon Pride Festival flag-raising ceremony on Monday, June 14 at noon as the event will be live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube. The Saskatoon Pride Festival runs from June 12-19, and beyond the Pride flag being raised on campus, a number of digital initiatives are taking place across the USask community.

The University Library is sponsoring a session on Two Spirit Voices as part of Spark Your Pride, in partnership with the Saskatoon Pride Festival and the Western Development Museum on Tuesday, June 15. Everyone is invited to register for this free virtual event. On Thursday, June 17, USask is sponsoring the Global Panel Discussion on Trans



Dr. Simonne Horwitz (PhD), USask associate professor in history and co-chair of the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Gender and Sexual Diversity.

Rights and Responses to Anti-Trans Movements, also presented by Saskatoon Pride and free for all to attend virtually.

SEE USSU, PAGE 15



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A lot happens at the USask during the weeks when *On Campus News* isn’t published. Here are a few of the top stories from news.usask.ca:

Smart 50 honour

The University of Saskatchewan (USask) and the City of Saskatoon have been honoured for their collaborative wastewater monitoring project that advances environmental and human health—one of 50 international projects named to the 2021 Smart 50 list. The awards recognize global “smart cities” projects, honouring “the most innovative and influential work.” The award will be presented at the Smart 50 Awards in Washington, D.C., in October. The award highlights work funded by the Research Junction partnership between the city and the university measuring levels of pharmaceuticals and SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater.

USask MOU

USask and Saskatchewan Collaborates Inc. (Co.Labs), the Saskatoon-based tech incubator, have signed a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at creating a pipeline of innovative ideas, services, and talent. USask has been a key sponsor of Co.Labs since the incubator’s inception in 2018. Under the agreement, the university will provide an annual investment of \$60,000 for three years. This is an increase from the original \$30,000 per year in support of Co.Launch—a 12-week program in which founders learn startup fundamentals and compete for funding and a full-time spot at Co.Labs.

New Frontiers

Three interdisciplinary, multi-institutional projects led by USask researchers received \$250,000 each over two years from the New Frontiers in Research Fund, which fosters innovative high-risk research with the potential for significant and impactful results. Awarded were the team led by multiple sclerosis researcher Dr. Michael Levin (MD), a College of Medicine neurology professor; a team headed by osteoporosis researcher Dr. David Cooper (PhD), professor of anatomy, physiology and pharmacology; and crop researchers led by Dr. Byung-Kook (Brian) Ham (PhD), research chair in Global Institute for Food Security.

Henry awarded

Dr. Carol Henry (PhD), a professor in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition at the University of Saskatchewan, is the lead researcher of an international team awarded \$100,000 from the Templeton World Charity Foundation for work aimed at seeing young women on two continents thrive. The team will gather data from diverse groups of adolescents in Northern Canada and Northern Uganda to discover the determinants of flourishing in physical, mental and cultural well-being among adolescents. Particular attention will be paid to spirituality and experiences of resilience in the face of adversity, such as the impacts of COVID-19.

FOR MORE UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS, VISIT: news.usask.ca @usask

Preserving and promoting Indigenous languages

✍️ JAMES SHEWAGA

Of the more than 60 Indigenous languages in Canada today, only three are projected to still be spoken 25 years from now.

At the University of Saskatchewan (USask), professors like Randy Morin are determined to change that. Morin is one of a small group of language experts working to ensure Indigenous languages not only survive, but thrive.

“There are around 63 Indigenous languages, but we know for sure that three went to sleep. We don’t call them extinct, we call them going to sleep,” said Morin, who teaches Cree classes and is a faculty member in the Department of Indigenous Studies in the College of Arts and Science. “Only Cree, Inuktituk and Ojibwa are expected to survive. We need to preserve our languages, protect the culture, the traditional ways of knowing. We lose so much when we lose the language.”

As the nation recognizes National Indigenous History Month in June and National Indigenous Peoples Day on June 21, Morin would like to see more resources committed across the country to preserving the traditional languages of the land.

“Prior to treaty, this whole area, all the treaty territories, were home to many nations that spoke their language,” said Morin, who holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education. “The language is intimately tied to the land, to the fauna, to the animals, to the natural world, to the weather. The language is Indigenous to this land. There is a lot of science coming out now, saying that the fate of the world lies with

Indigenous knowledge.

“We’re facing a global crisis in terms of climate change and the world’s last remaining most biodiverse regions are located on Indigenous lands. If we lose the language, we lose the medicines and the teachings, and traditional ecological knowledge dies. So, it’s imperative that we revitalize Indigenous languages.”

Currently, USask offers courses in Cree and Michif, but Morin said more is required to preserve thousands of years of history and heritage.

“Absolutely, the University of Saskatchewan has taken steps forward and it started off with the College of Education with Kevin Lewis, he created a Cree certificate, and that was a big thing to come out of the university,” Morin said. “But we also need Saulteaux teachers, we need Ojibway teachers, we need Dene teachers, and we need Blackfoot and Dakota, Nakota, Lakota teachers.”

Professors like Morin and Lewis, along with Elder Norman Fleury—a leader in Michif language revitalization—are three of the language leaders on campus. Morin also credits Joan Greyeyes—former director of First Nations and Métis relations at USask—for bringing a cohort of the University of Victoria’s master’s program in Indigenous Language Revitalization to campus in 2016, the kind of program Morin said USask is hoping to soon offer.

“At the university we are

creating our own master’s degree program in Indigenous language revitalization, and that is with three colleges involved,” said Morin. “We had to put it on hold with the pandemic, but we are back working with it and hoping to start teaching the classes in the future.”

Morin is also excited about working on in collaboration with Lewis and Dr. Marguerite Koole (PhD)—associate professor of curriculum studies in the College of Education—as well as other teachers, researchers and computer programmers, to design a web-based database—*wicêhtowin*—to help teach Indigenous languages. The project links learners with tailor-made apps, websites, and video/audio collections.

“We are working with the computer scientists to create an interactive app that is going to be different than your average Indigenous language app, since most of them are basically dictionaries,” said Morin. “My job is translating and recording, and offering suggestions. The app specialists are going to be instrumental in making sure that it is going to work well. I’ve just got to ensure that the content is authentic.”

Morin is also proud to be scheduled to teach the 200-level class in Cree language and culture in 2022, a certificate program offered through Indigenous Studies. Morin is also working on an emerging speaker certificate from the 100 to 400 levels, concluding with a weeklong cultural language immersion camp.

“I’m trying not to do it with textbooks, since we haven’t really produced a lot of fluent speakers



Professor Randy Morin teaches Cree language classes at USask.

📷 SUBMITTED

with textbook learning,” said Morin, who also writes children’s books in English and Cree that come with audio tracks. “I am trying land-based learning, trying drama, contemporary writing. I want to try different things.”

According to a 2016 Statistics Canada report, the number of people who identified an Indigenous language as their mother tongue in Saskatchewan dropped 2,500 since 2011.

“We have an idea which languages are strong and which ones are weak,” said Morin, who is also involved with Nehiyawak.org, a grassroots organization that teaches Indigenous languages. “We know Cree is still being actively spoken,

and Dene, which is strong up north. Saulteaux is another big one in Saskatchewan. But Michif and Dakota, Nakota, Lakota are really threatened. We have to remain optimistic that it is not too late. It’s a good direction where the university is going, but in terms of languages, we need to do more.”

Morin said one challenge is motivating the younger generation to want to learn the languages of their ancestors.

“Our younger generation does not see the value in the culture and the language,” he said. “So we are trying to get our youth to decolonize and reconnect with our ways of knowing and be proud of who they are.”

Plight of northern trappers shows need for education and activism: USask professor



Dr. Priscilla Settee (PhD) is a professor in the Department of Indigenous Studies in the College of Arts and Science.

DAVID STOBBE

CHRIS PUTNAM

The hardships and environmental damage reported by trappers in Northern Saskatchewan should be a “wake-up call” for all Canadians, says University of Saskatchewan (USask) professor Dr. Priscilla Settee (PhD).

Settee, a faculty member in the College of Arts and Science’s Department of Indigenous Studies, recently completed a one-year fellowship with the David Suzuki Foundation in which she researched the effects of industry and climate change on the lives of northern Indigenous trappers.

Settee, a member of the Cumberland House Cree Nation, interviewed trappers and Traditional Knowledge Keepers in her home community and heard them describe what she calls a “monumental crisis” affecting the local environment.

“What’s being destroyed is a way of life. One thing the trappers talked about was it’s not just hunting and trapping—it’s a worldview.

It’s a worldview that we share with the millions of Indigenous folks throughout the world, and unfortunately it’s always been the object of pillage,” she said.

Trappers in the community 350 km northeast of Saskatoon reported devastating effects on the surrounding area from clearcutting and dam construction. Fluctuating water levels in the local river have caused beavers to starve, prevented moose from reaching the river and cut off access to traplines.

Settee heard accounts of the local impacts of climate change, including softer snow and ice that has restricted the movement of animals. Fires are destroying plant life and traplines, and big game animals that were plentiful even 20

years ago have become rare.

“That’s major. I think people are no longer able to live on hunting and trapping. The whole economy is being disrupted,” said Settee.

Settee recently submitted her final report on the project, which she anticipates will soon be published by the David Suzuki Foundation. In it, she attempts to raise the alarm about the ongoing crisis while also seeking solutions.

One of those solutions, Settee believes, will be social economic development: a model in which the control and profits of enterprises are kept within the communities in which they are developed.

“Currently, we live with a model where someone else makes the planning down in Regina or

Ottawa and we live with the consequences,” said Settee. “I teach on social economies, and I’m making a very strong suggestion that we need to begin looking at sustainable development.”

Settee points to examples such as Aki Industries in Winnipeg, an Indigenous-run alternative energy company that has installed geothermal systems in hundreds of homes on First Nations in partnership with the communities.

But for social economies to succeed, Settee argues, they will need support and baseline funding from governments. Average citizens will also need to speak out about preserving the environment and traditional practices.

“There’s not enough resistance by ordinary folks. There’s not enough education about (Indigenous) ways of life. So we have a lot of education to do and white people have a lot of learning to do, especially

if they want to be allies in preserving the natural world—which I think today’s youth do,” Settee said.

Settee believes universities can play an important role by conducting more critical and analytical research, by training students in Indigenous knowledge systems, and by hearing the voices of young people.

“I don’t pretend to know everything about what needs to be done, but I sure do know that if change is to occur it’s because we are mobilizing the youth and listening to their concerns,” said Settee.

In April, Settee began another one-year fellowship. As a 2021 NDN Changemaker Fellow, she will engage in work that defends, develops and decolonizes Indigenous communities and nations. ♥

Chris Putnam is a communications officer in the USask College of Arts and Science.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Every month in *On Campus News*, we highlight exceptional graduates of the University of Saskatchewan (USask) in our Alumni Spotlight series. In this issue, as we prepare to celebrate Pride Week, we profile Elizabeth Plishka (BASc'19, CCA'20), who headed north to provide safer, inclusive health care for the Queer community in Whitehorse, Yukon.

Elizabeth Plishka is the health education co-ordinator with Blood Ties Four Directions Centre.



Yukon a brave new world for USask grad

JOHN GRAINGER

For Elizabeth Plishka (BASc'19, CCA'20), getting her ideal job right out of university was like a dream come true even though it required her to pack her bags, leave the safety net of her family and home in Saskatoon, and make the long trek north to Whitehorse, Yukon.

"This is exactly what I wanted right out of university. I cried multiple times after moving up here," Plishka recalled in a phone interview. "I have to stop pinching myself because I couldn't believe I got my dream job right out of university."

That big move did come with the realization she was heading out into the world alone.

"I lived with my parents all through university. It was easier that way," said Plishka, who attended Walter Murray Collegiate in Saskatoon. "I went from living in the same house my entire life to running away to an isolated corner of Canada."

For Plishka, the decision was easy when she accepted the position in Whitehorse as the health education co-ordinator with

“ We’re working really closely with Queer Yukon, which has been amazing. They reached out to us and asked for some queer and trans-specific training.

— Elizabeth Plishka (BASc'19, CCA'20)

Blood Ties Four Directions Centre. Blood Ties' mission is to eliminate barriers and make health and wellness services available to all in a non-judgmental setting.

When she graduated from the University of Saskatchewan (USask), she told herself she would go anywhere in the country if a job in a harm reduction educator role was the right fit. So for Plishka, her decision had already been made.

Plishka had already been going down this path even before her time at USask, of which both of her parents are fellow graduates. She said her family is very health-care oriented and she felt a pull in that direction from an early age.

"Back in high school, I asked my family where a good place would be for me to volunteer and to start dipping my toes in health care," said Plishka, who won the award for most outstanding graduate in health sciences in 2019 from the College of Arts and Science.

Plishka took a volunteer position at the Student Wellness Initiative Toward Community Health (SWITCH) in Saskatoon, a place where the city's core residents can find information on culturally safe health care, nutrition and education. SWITCH also provides future health-care professionals with somewhere to learn more and augment their own training.

"I became very passionate about what I was doing there and I learned a ton about myself through volunteering at SWITCH."

Plishka also made a connection with Jason Mercredi (BED'09), the executive director at Prairie Harm Reduction, formerly AIDS Saskatoon. Learning about the HIV crisis in Saskatoon really drove her desire to help more.

Mercredi could see Plishka's passion to understand harm reduction and offered his time and guidance to help her learn and solidify her intent in her career choice.

"Learning about that crisis is kind of what ignited my passion for harm reduction as a line of work. And then all the way through university, I found myself getting more and more involved in harm reduction."

That involvement also included Plishka assuming the role as University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) Help Centre co-ordinator, a position she occupied while attending university.

Armed with a plethora of experiences from Saskatoon, Plishka

headed north and has already added to her role as the health education co-ordinator at Blood Ties by creating awareness for queer inclusiveness training, a first in the city and territory.

"We're working really closely with Queer Yukon, which has been amazing. They reached out to us and asked for some queer and trans-specific training."

As in many places in Western Canada, Whitehorse is also seeing a rise in overdoses and overdose deaths. This is an area of deep concern for Plishka and she hopes that her work will eventually lower these numbers.

Despite the hard work ahead, the sudden move to Whitehorse still seems like a no-brainer now for Plishka, who is settling into her role by starting to implement programming she feels necessary. Working with Queer Yukon, Plishka said the partnership will benefit even more people in the territory for years to come. ♥

John Grainger is a communications officer in University Relations.

Ken M. was selected valedictorian for the nutrition class of 2021 in USask's College of Pharmacy and Nutrition.

 SUBMITTED



 SUBMITTED

Ken M., displaying bowls of lentils, created an online project titled **Eating Pulses Improves Cardiometabolic (EPIC) Health**.

Passion for nutrition drives future dietitian

 KIERAN KOBITZ

For Ken M., a passion for nutrition has led to a four-year professional and personal journey that has been transformative.

“Ken’s natural leadership abilities shone within the classroom,” said Dr. Allison Cammer (PhD), assistant professor in nutrition at the University of Saskatchewan (USask). “He was an active participant in all class discussions and activities, putting his natural curiosity and passion for connecting with people to good use.”

But it was Ken’s experiences outside of the classroom that helped create a rich and fulfilling experience during his time at USask.

Ken became interested in creating social media content when he noticed gaps in online health information and education, and has been active on his own social media and with formal projects. One recent project was Eating Pulses Improves Cardiometabolic (EPIC) Health, which is an evidence-based resource for pulse-based recipes and provided Ken the opportunity to demonstrate his enthusiasm for nutrition on video.

“I like to have fun and I like

when other people have fun, so I saw the opportunity to help other people enjoy learning,” explained Ken. “I’ve connected with dietitians and students all over the world who want to start creating content.”

Ken also connected with people in person by volunteering with OUTSaskatoon and the Nutrition Professional Enhancement Club, and he founded and was co-president of a plant-based eating student group on campus.

“Ken’s compassion, paired with his critical thinking skills, make him a leader in nutrition and dietetics,” added Dr. Cammer.

Ken’s growth over the last four years hasn’t only been professional.

During his nutrition degree, he took a big step forward in a personal journey which continues to this day.

“When I started this degree, I presented as a woman, and now I’m ending it as a man. I’ve been transitioning from female to male,” explained Ken.

It wasn’t an easy decision to come out as a trans man, as many people face challenges and discrimination when they do so.

“It was tough to come out and the journey hasn’t been easy, but my classmates were supportive and cheered me on, while expressing gratitude for demonstrating how to be inclusive and affirming to trans people.”

Ken hopes to inspire more students to accept diversity, and to help more queer and trans students to become dietitians.

“A lot of people have reached out to me, some of them out and some not, and have said they’re happy to see a queer person in the field and know they’re not alone.”

Ken was chosen as valedictorian for the nutrition class of 2021, in a vote by his classmates. The nutrition valedictorian is selected by popular vote at the end of the third year of the program before the students begin their fourth-year practicums.

“The first things that pop into my head when I think of Ken are his enthusiasm, his willingness to help others, and his love for weird food combinations,” said classmate Cheska Daguio.

According to the guidelines,

the nutrition valedictorian is someone who has demonstrated professionalism, leadership, and academic achievement; and they have connected with their classmates as friends and colleagues.

“Over the years we have shared many laughs as we sat in the front row of our classes, shared food and flung origami ninja stars to one another,” continued Daguio. “Although classes are done and everyone is going into different directions with their jobs, having a friend like Ken is something I will cherish for long after our convocation.”

Now that Ken has completed his nutrition degree, he plans on fulfilling the requirements to become a registered dietitian and is starting a new position as a trans health navigator.

While it’s not a traditional job for a dietitian, Ken is honoured to be able to help trans people access community supports and health-care providers to address their unique health-care needs. He’ll also help providers become educated on providing trans health care and will continue to produce social media content.

“Now that I’m going to be a dietitian, I want to create more social media content, be an activist for my community and one day start my own practice.”

Kieran Kobitz is the communications and alumni relations specialist in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition.

From tragedy to triumph for top student

MEAGAN HINTHER

The enthusiasm and joy in Chandra Groves' voice is palpable as the College of Education graduate describes her student practicum experience during a year when the pandemic created many challenges for elementary and high schools.

"When I came into my internship last fall, it sounds almost cheesy, but I was simply so happy to be there. I was so grateful to have finally arrived at this milestone," said Groves. "The amount of obstacles that got in my way, that could have stopped me, were immense. None of them did, though."

One of those obstacles was almost insurmountable. In 2018, Groves was the victim in a serious motor vehicle collision that left her with a traumatic brain injury and many other physical injuries large and small. At the time of the collision, she was roughly one year into her Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Saskatchewan (USask). Groves spent more than a year in recovery navigating incredible health challenges and recently shared the isolating experience of healing from an invisible injury in a personal essay for CBC Saskatchewan.

It's those challenges of the past few years that have helped Groves appreciate and embrace her new career in education. Groves earned a degree in business and communications in 2009 from the University of Jamestown in North Dakota, where she attended on a volleyball scholarship. Following eight years

working in business, she decided the time was right to transition into a career closer to her heart.

"It was really important for me to get into a field of work where my ability to build relationships and encourage others was the goal of my job and the marker for success, rather than a monetary milestone," Groves shared.

She was supported by many people throughout her recovery including her fiancé Lyle, family, friends, College of Education staff and faculty, and a team of medical professionals. However, it was Groves' drive and commitment to the role of educator that helped her through her final terms as a teacher candidate.

"Coming back while still healing from a brain injury required a lot of adaptation, flexibility and, at times, perseverance. There were a few months when I first came back where I thought 'I don't know if I can do this,'" said Groves.

She is incredibly grateful for the perspective her healing journey gave her and credits it with helping her connect with the students in her classrooms that may be facing their own variety of visible and invisible disabilities.



SUBMITTED

College of Education graduate Chandra Groves stands on the highway holding a fragmented piece of her car one year after a serious motor vehicle collision that left her with a traumatic brain injury.

"When I first came back from my accident, I had College of Education faculty connect with me on a human to human basis. It wasn't like, you're the student and I'm the professor," said Groves. "It provided such a holistic perspective of what it's like to be the teacher of a student that needs a little bit of extra help sometimes. And that's a perspective that I didn't have before."

This dedication to her studies and to her practicum placement led Groves to receive the top student awards presented by the College of Education during USask's virtual Spring Convocation ceremony. These included the Professionalism Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Award, which are presented to the top practicum student and to the student with the highest academic average, respectively. The Professionalism Award

for Excellence in Teaching recipient is chosen from the pool of students who received the Bates Award, presented to those who excelled in their practicum placements.

Groves was nominated for the Bates Award by her collaborating teacher Ryan Michalenko at Bethlehem Catholic High School for her dedication to excellence and to ensuring students in her classes received all the supports necessary to be successful.

"Chandra resourcefully responded to the many students who, at varying times, were forced to self-isolate at home and took it upon herself to meet with absent students online to fill in any gaps in their learning and to simply check-in on how they were doing," said Michalenko.

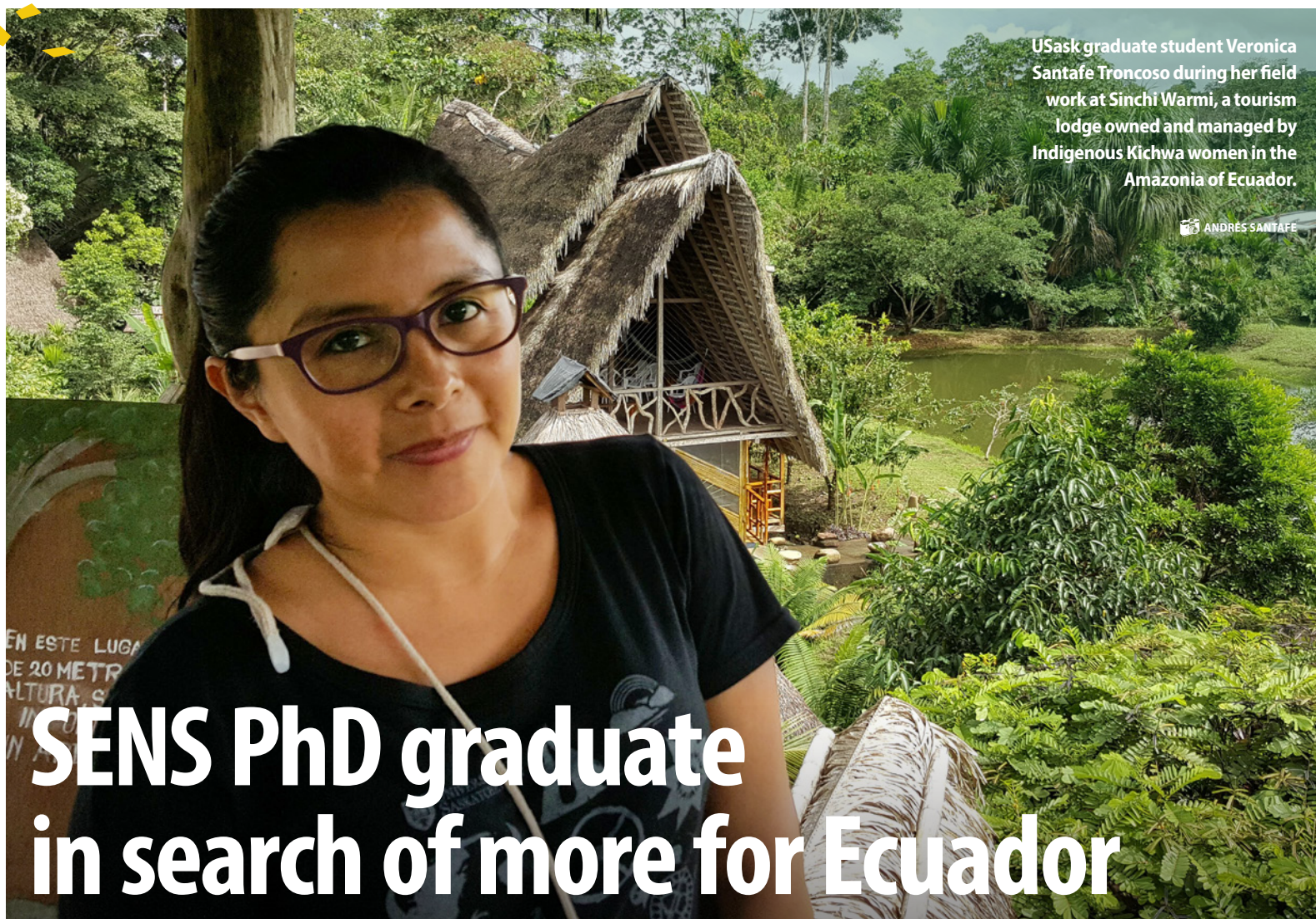
"This was not required or suggested of her, and became a standard of excellence for teachers to

follow, placing Chandra in a unique position for an intern: that of being a role model for teachers, new and experienced," he added.

Since completing her internship and wrapping up her coursework, Groves accepted a term position until the end of this school year teaching Grade 2 at École Holy Mary Catholic School in Martensville. She has interviewed with each of the Saskatoon and area school divisions and is hoping to receive a contract offer for the fall.

"Every day that I come to school as a teacher, even when it's hard, or even when the days are long or something doesn't go right, it still fills my cup. And that's how I know that I got it right this time," said Groves. ♥

Meagan Hinthier is the manager of communications and external relations in USask's College of Education.



USask graduate student Veronica Santafe Troncoso during her field work at Sinchi Warmi, a tourism lodge owned and managed by Indigenous Kichwa women in the Amazonia of Ecuador.

ANDRÉS SANTAFE

SENS PhD graduate in search of more for Ecuador

MEGAN EVANS

For Dr. Veronica Santafe Troncoso (PhD), a 2021 PhD graduate from the University of Saskatchewan (USask) School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS), her doctorate is the culmination of personal, professional, and academic life experiences to date.

“For me, the PhD was not the goal. The PhD was a tool for my mission in life: I want to contribute to a more sustainable and just society, no matter what role I’m in,” said Santafe Troncoso. “Whether that’s teaching, business, working in government ... those are my values in life, and the PHD was a tool to help me to develop these values.”

A Latinx woman who is proud of her Indigenous and campesino

roots, Santafe Troncoso has herself experienced the same struggles that impoverished families in the rural areas of Ecuador suffer, especially cultural discrimination and the lack of access to land and water sources.

“Since my childhood I have witnessed the negative environmental and social impacts that extractive industries and agribusiness have had on my community and in most of the rural communities in

Ecuador,” she said. “I did my bachelor’s degree in tourism and environmental conservation because I saw tourism as an opportunity for a more sustainable and just development for my community and other rural communities in Ecuador.”

After finishing her bachelor’s degree, she decided to pursue a master’s in social and ecological studies, which provided her with a more critical perspective on tourism. Later she worked as a teacher and researcher for the School of Tourism and Hospitality at UTE University in Ecuador. There, she realized another critical issue in tourism scholarship.

“I realized that most academic resources in sustainable tourism were written by scholars who were

not affiliated with institutions in Ecuador or Latin America—they were mostly written by scholars from the Global North. Being aware of this situation, I decided to pursue a doctoral degree that provides me with scientific tools to create knowledge in the tourism and sustainability fields that are contextual and representative of Ecuador and Latin American communities.”

“Exploring for PhD programs that were focused on sustainability, food systems, and Indigenous issues, I came across SENS and Dr. Philip Loring (PhD), who became my supervisor and guide during my doctoral journey,” she added. “I am one of the first scholars to connect [food sovereignty and tourism] and

create a framework for empirical research.”

The idea of using her roots to advance her research is something that Loring—her doctoral advisor—also saw.

“It was an amazing experience working with Dr. Santafe Troncoso as she completed her doctoral research. She is truly a skilled qualitative researcher and has already pushed the field of sustainable tourism forward. I expect that she will quickly emerge as a leader who bridges Indigenous scholarship in the Global North and Global South,” said Loring, now an associate professor and Arrell Chair in Food, Policy and Society, at the University of Guelph, and a SENS adjunct professor.

With her PhD in hand, Santafe Troncoso is working as an entrepreneur and consultant. She owns Vital Experiences, an online store that promotes artisanal work and chocolate experiences from Ecuador. During 2020 she worked as an advisor for tourism development and multicultural entrepreneurship for local organizations and businesses in Alberta. She is also a member and does volunteer work for Ekpapalek, a non-profit organization that promotes gender equality and provides free coaching for youth and women in Latin America.

“For me, studying is a privilege,” she said. “I’m the first member of my family to finish university, to learn a new language, to travel overseas, and to get a PhD. I’m so happy when I see my sister and other women in my family developing their careers. I am grateful for the School of Environment and Sustainability, the University of Saskatchewan, and Dr. Philip Loring for giving me the opportunity to pursue my doctoral degree. Without their academic and financial support, I would not have been able to complete this important goal in my life.”

Megan Evans is the communications specialist in the School of Environment and Sustainability.

WCVM graduate Dr. Reina Fennell (DVM) and her horse Shadow on Haida Gwaii's North Beach in B.C.

 SUBMITTED



New veterinarian to pursue her dream in New Zealand

 LYNNE GUNVILLE

Nearly a year ago, Dr. Reina Fennell (DVM) recalls looking down at a discharge sheet—her first patient, the first case of her first clinical rotation in her final year at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) on the University of Saskatchewan (USask) campus.

“I remember looking at my name printed on the bottom of the discharge as I handed it to the client,” said Fennell. “I thought, ‘Oh gosh! I’m like almost a veterinarian!’

That was the first time it suddenly felt real—a dream 24 years in the making, and all of a sudden I was nearly there.”

From the time Fennell was a

“wild, outdoorsy, animal-loving kid” growing up on Haida Gwaii in British Columbia, she has dreamed of becoming a veterinarian. She kept a menagerie of pets that included

chickens, ducks and lizards, and her treasured horse Shadow.

Now that Fennell is officially a practitioner after graduating, she’s looking forward to the next phase of her dream—a one-year internship at Veterinary Associates Equine in New Zealand. As a rotating intern at the general and referral practice near Auckland, N.Z., Fennell will spend her first six months working in specialties including anesthesia, surgery, internal medicine, reproduction and lameness.

“By the second half of the year we work as largely an independent practitioner, but always with a support system of people to round with or to call for advice,” Fennell explained. “They seek to develop a proficient, high-quality equine veterinarian who will do well in a private practice or a residency.”

Fennell anticipates a diverse caseload—a product of New Zealand’s unique equine culture that has veterinarians working with “everything from a Grand Prix jumper to a hobby farmer’s pet donkey in the same day.”

Having already spent six months volunteering on New Zealand farms, Fennell feels an affinity with the people and the culture of a country that’s reminiscent of Haida Gwaii, the chain of islands off the B.C. coast where she grew up.

“It’s like a much bigger Haida Gwaii; the culture is very similar,” Fennell said. “Kiwis work to live, not live to work, and although I’m passionate about this career, I want to find some sort of work-life balance. I think the New Zealand way of life will facilitate that.”

While Fennell remembers the challenges of vet school, she also has many positive memories of student life. She particularly appreciates the friendships and the activities that included walks between classes, game nights, dance nights, cinema Fridays, camping and hiking trips and “family” dinners on holidays away from home.

“My friends got me through my DVM [program]. I love my whole class, but having people you become really close to is critical to staying

positive and happy amidst the challenges of this program. We had a lot of fun despite our extremely cramped schedules,” said Fennell. “All of those times stand out for me far more than the countless nights and weekends of studying. They were really worth fitting in.”

Fennell also appreciates the encouragement she received from WCVM faculty members such as beef cattle specialist Dr. John Campbell (DVM, DVSc) and veterinary pathologist Dr. Bruce Wobeser (DVM, PhD). Dr. Tiago Afonso’s (DVM, PhD) equine medicine lectures were favourites for Fennell, and she greatly valued his help with securing the New Zealand internship.

Fennell’s summer work experiences were valuable opportunities for her to take a break from classes while developing and practising her clinical skills. She particularly enjoyed her first clinic job at Kamloops Large Animal Clinic in interior B.C.

“I lived in a tiny camper trailer in a field that summer with my horse Shadow in the field,” said Fennell. “He’d bump his nose against my window in the morning to wake me up ... I loved going on calls with the vets all over the valley and neighbouring valleys. I was introduced to routine beef cattle work, equine dentistry and some minor equine surgery as well as equine ambulatory emergency and some in-hospital critical care stuff.”

As Fennell prepares for her New Zealand internship, she looks forward to developing competency with a variety of horses and medical issues while honing her clinical problem-solving skills.

“I enjoy every part of ambulatory work, from chatting in the truck with clinicians to visiting people and their animals on farms,” said Fennell. “I like just being outside and the physicality of working with large animals in a variety of circumstances.”

Lynne Gunville is a freelance writer with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at USask.

JSGS MPA graduate has life-changing experience on his first day of classes

EMILIE NEUDORF

Ian Worme graduated with a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree after a five-year academic journey that began in the most unconventional way—with the birth of his youngest daughter.

Just eight hours after welcoming his daughter, Julie, into the world, Worme shifted his focus from the birthing room at Royal University Hospital (RUH) to the MPA classroom in the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS) at the University of Saskatchewan (USask). Luckily, for him, RUH was only a quick walk away from where he would spend the next five years as a part-time graduate student.

“I went to class that day with roughly four hours of sleep,” said Worme. “It was a surreal moment in time!”

Worme would go on to spend the next three nights at RUH with his family, stepping out for portions of each day to attend classes. The melding of these two events made for a memorable start for both him and his family.

Five years after celebrating the birth of his daughter, Worme is now celebrating the completion of his MPA degree, officially received on June 1, 2021, during USask’s virtual convocation week.

Worme is from Kawacatoose First Nation in Treaty 4 territory on his paternal side, and Chisasibi Cree Nation near James Bay in Quebec, on his maternal side. He is also an educator, consultant, and proud community member of Whitecap Dakota First Nation, the reserve where his partner is a registered band member. He values self-knowledge and his Indigenous identity which come from his language, culture, and great respect for the outdoors—a place where you can often find him with his two daughters.

Interested in administration, government, partnerships, and politics, Worme was drawn to JSGS after completing his Bachelor of Education degree through the Indigenous Teacher Education Program at USask. He saw many ways in which an MPA could benefit the work he was doing.

“During my studies, I was able to apply new knowledge and concepts to my actual work in the field of education, governance,

and partnership development,” said Worme. “Plus, studying as a part-time student meant that I had the flexibility needed to continue working full-time while spending time with my growing family.”

Throughout his time at JSGS, he also participated in study groups, potlucks, and attended the many guest lectures organized by the school. These activities were important in building relationships and learning from fellow students. He found that listening to the perspectives and stories of international students was valuable—especially those of Indigenous students from Northern Russia.

Looking to the future, Worme would like to do work focused on treaty education and governance. Ideally, he would like to instruct and/or develop compulsory courses that address the gaps he sees in treaty education and Indigenous-focused policy.

“I want to see the mandate of treaty education be truly fulfilled and valued within the non-In-

igenous public sector, in both education and government,” said Worme. “Treaty education needs to be an actual course facilitated in each school with a designated provincial curriculum, and we need to see universities with compulsory treaty education. More is needed to educate citizens on the impacts of race-based policies and legislation.”

He also wants to see land-based education taught in all First Nation communities, where it is part of the curriculum set by the community. Worme’s advice for new students at JSGS is to take as many Indigenous-focused courses as they can so that future generations may live in a Canada with well-informed policy-

makers, leaders in government, and educators.

“I believe that treaties are constitutional documents that aided in the mapping of the past and present privileges Canadians receive today and that we, as a society, have shared social capital in this country,” said Worme. “It is vital as policy students that we all understand how governmental actions have impacted the livelihood of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.”

Emilie Neudorf is a communications and marketing assistant with the Johnston-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy.



Ian Worme earned his master's through JSGS at USask.

SUBMITTED

Gomez-Picos moves from Mexico to USask to earn doctorate

✍️ AMANDA WORONIUK

For many Saskatchewan residents, a trip to a tropical destination is a winter ritual. But Dr. Patsy Gomez-Picos (PhD) traded in the mild temperatures of Mexico and moved to Canada for her doctoral program at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).

The graduate student in the College of Medicine's Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology received her doctoral degree during USask's 2021 Spring Convocation.

She completed her undergraduate degree in biotechnology in her hometown of Mazatlán, Mexico. Having previously lived in Canada as a teenager, Gomez-Picos was interested in returning for her graduate studies.

"A lot of people ask me, why did you come to Canada? I loved the country and the multicultural environment, how welcoming Canadians are, and wanted to come back," said Gomez-Picos.

She was looking for PhD programs that included her interest in biology. The research in Dr. Brian Eames' (PhD) lab caught

her attention. He happened to be recruiting students at the time, and Gomez-Picos became his first PhD student.

"Dr. Eames had a very interesting program that involved skeletal development and many molecular biology techniques, which I had learned during my undergrad," she said.

"I really liked the research and what it involves. It was about cartilage and bone development, but also a lot of new techniques that I didn't have the background, but was interested to learn. Lots of novel histological and imaging techniques."

Gomez-Picos' research investigated the evolution of skeletal cells, and how cells make cartilage and bone in vertebrae in different animals. The research has real-world

applications for osteoarthritis, a disease that affects many individuals in Canada, and has high costs to the Canadian health care system.

Further, her research looked at how genes are expressed in bone and cartilage of different animals, with a focus on the deterioration of cartilage, which occurs during normal bone development of the embryo. A similar process of cartilage deterioration develops in people with osteoarthritis.

"The main focus of my study is the evolutionary perspective. For example, how bones in mammals compare to those in chicken or fish," she said. "We investigated which genes are expressed in skeletal tissues of the embryo, but they actually have potential targets that can be used as therapeutic agents to treat diseases."

For her academic success, Gomez-Picos was awarded the dean's scholarship for three years, along with the departmental scholarship for international students.

In addition, she is nominated for the USask Doctoral Dissertation Award, which is presented during



Dr. Patsy Gomez-Picos (PhD) moved from Mexico to Canada to earn her doctorate at the University of Saskatchewan.

📄 SUBMITTED

convocation.

"I really appreciate that support," Gomez-Picos said. "Without that support, I wouldn't have been able to study abroad. There are many different (USask) scholarships that international students are eligible for that many other universities don't have, so that's very attractive to us."

When the pandemic hit and USask research was paused, Gomez-Picos was fortunate to have her experiments already completed. She was working on her thesis and was also balancing motherhood, having given birth to her daughter in 2019.

While it wasn't easy to balance academia and parenting, Gomez-Picos managed to successfully juggle both.

"I did not expect to finish graduate school during a pandemic. No one could have imagined this," she said. "For me, I was able to spend my daughter's first year with her, but at the same time it was very challenging, because I had to write my thesis at the time."

For students who may have struggled with their studies, she had words of encouragement.

"I want to say to students, they are not alone. Just keep working hard," she said. "It's been tough, mentally speaking, but we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel." 🍀

Amanda Woroniuk is a communications co-ordinator in USask's College of Medicine.

From overseas to completing International Dental Degree Program

JENNA FRASER

After an academic journey that has taken him to three continents, Dr. Manpreet Kakkar (DMD) has finally completed his quest to practice dentistry in North America.

Kakkar graduated this spring from the University of Saskatchewan (USask's) College of Dentistry International Dental Degree Program (IDDP), a program that allows students who have already earned a dental degree from an institution in another country that is not recognized by the Commission on Dental Accreditation in Canada to complete a Canadian Doctor of Dental Medicine program in two years.

"USask College of Dentistry has a great reputation as a clinical program, which made me choose USask over other dental schools," said Kakkar. "I have been very lucky to be a part of the first ever IDDP class, no one will ever be able to take that away."

Originally from India, born

and raised in the small town of Jalalabad in the northern part of India, Kakkar completed his dental degree in India in 2007. In the two years following the completion of his dental degree, Kakkar owned and worked in a private practice before travelling to Australia to complete a two-year diploma in dental technology at the Holmesglen Institute of TAFE in Australia.

Upon completion of his diploma, Kakkar returned to India where alongside a team of dentists from his multispecialty clinic he focused on making a difference in their community. Their outreach efforts catered to thousands of patients and took two distinct approaches to oral health care: prevention and—in response

to the lack of prevention in the community—providing free dental health care for the elderly.

"I was deeply enthusiastic about reaching out to these communities, which made me deeply honoured when I was selected as one of nine health-care providers from India for a Chinese outreach program entitled 'India-China Joint Medical Mission' in 2014," said Kakkar.

Kakkar spent seven years as the head of this multispecialty clinic, before his continued quest for knowledge took hold again and he travelled to New York to shadow Dr. Janmeet Grover (DMD) in 2015.

"I was highly impressed by Dr. Grover's evidence-based, patient-centered clinic and became convinced that an advanced standing program could give me the desired personal and professional satisfaction and become the next platform to increase my clinic knowledge and experience," said Kakkar.

With that, Kakkar spent 2018



Dr. Manpreet Kakkar (DMD) earned his dental accreditation in Canada through USask's College of Dentistry.


 SUBMITTED

travelling between Ontario to study for the National Dental Examining Board's Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge (AFK) exam, and India, where he continued to run his dental practice.

After successfully completing his AFK exam, Kakkar began applying to North American schools for international dental programs. He received his first interview invite from USask. He attended the interview and was accepted in the program. He officially entered the IDDP program in June of 2019 to become a member of the inaugural class.

While they have had to adjust

to cold Saskatoon winters, Kakkar and his wife have seamlessly settled into life in Saskatoon and intend to continue to call the city home after his graduation.

"We have really started liking the City of Saskatoon, my wife has a really good opportunity here where she loves working and my daughter has made great friends at school, which made us decide to purchase a house in Saskatoon," said Kakkar. "People in Saskatoon are super welcoming; I truly feel privileged and honoured to be here today." 

Jenna Fraser is the communications officer in the College of Dentistry.

Clarke, Benko earn top graduating student awards

ALYSSA WIEBE

After earning the top awards in the College of Kinesiology, Mason Clarke and Kaitlyn Benko are now preparing to pursue their passion to be chiropractors.

Each year the College of Kinesiology at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) selects one student who stands out among their peers to earn the title of Most Outstanding Graduate. The successful student must demonstrate leadership and participation within the college, on campus, and in their community, with academic performance also taken into consideration.

This year's Most Outstanding Graduate is Clarke, who comes from the community of Rosetown, Sask., and pursued a degree in kinesiology after discovering her passion for health and wellness.

"I am so honoured and honestly shocked to be named the top graduate," said Clarke. "I am very thankful for this award and it makes all of the hard work, busy days, and stress throughout my degree worth it! There are so many outstanding individuals that I am graduating with and I am very grateful for the recognition."

Clarke has been involved with the college through two student groups; Kinesiology Student Society (KiSS Council) and Do Something, a non-profit group that allows students to make a difference through partnerships with local charities and community initiatives. This past

year, she was elected vice-president of the KiSS Council in which she led meetings, planned events, and served as a standing member on the college's Undergraduate Planning Committee.

She continued to give back to the college as a note taker for Access and Equity Services, a support available to students who are unable to take notes in class due to medical or other reasons, as well as a volunteer with Physical Activity for Active Living (PAAL), and as a peer mentor to first-year kinesiology students.

As a student and volunteer, Clarke found ways to continue to strengthen her experience as a dance teacher to youth from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, a league manager with Campus Recreation, as well as participating on multiple recreation sports teams.

"My time in the College of Kinesiology has been the four best, and fastest, years of my life. I absolutely loved my time as an undergraduate student, and I have met so many amazing people and learned so much," expressed Clarke. "The professors within the college are amazing and although this past year has been difficult with the pandemic, the hard work demon-

strated by the faculty has been outstanding. Although stressful at times, being a student in the College of Kinesiology has been an amazing experience."

The second major award in kinesiology at USask Spring Convocation is the Dean's Medal, presented to the graduating student with the highest academic average. The recipient of the 2021 Dean's Medal is Benko, who has always been thorough in her studies, which she attributes to helping her earn a 94.13 per cent average.

"Being diligent with my studies has been an important priority in my life over the past four years, so it is a huge honour to be recognized for that effort," said Benko, who is from Martensville, Sask.

During high school, Benko became interested in learning about how the body functions and the impact that physical activity has on one's health and day-to-day living. She grew up with a sport background in competitive figure skating and soccer and understood and valued the principle of living an active lifestyle and wanted to explore the diversity of kinesiology in more depth. Her interests were particularly in the areas of anatomy, sport psychology, and motor functioning.



Kaitlyn Benko is the 2021 recipient of the Dean's Medal in the College of Kinesiology.

SUBMITTED



Mason Clarke is this year's Most Outstanding Graduate in the College of Kinesiology.

SUBMITTED

Earning the honour did not come without support and mentors. Benko was quick to recognize her mother, Kelly, for displaying qualities of endless creativity, patience, and generosity and helping her to emulate these in her own life.

In the college, she acknowledged her supervisor, Dr. Kevin Spink (PhD), who helped her conduct a novel research project, while developing a strong appreciation for research and writing a thesis.

"I am very grateful for his mentorship and support throughout

the entire process and am so excited with what we were able to accomplish," said Benko.

With their degrees in hand, Benko and Clarke are now focused on the future and the next steps in their careers. This fall, Clarke will be moving to Minneapolis to begin her Doctor of Chiropractic degree at North Western Health Sciences University, while Benko will be applying to chiropractic school. ♥

Alyssa Wiebe is the communications and advancement officer in USask's College of Kinesiology.



After earning diplomas in agribusiness and agronomy at USask, Cheyenne Dumont is now working as a crop input associate for Cargill.

SUBMITTED

AgBio graduate plants the seeds of success

BRETT MAKULOWICH

Cheyenne Dumont has been doing double time to earn two diplomas from the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at University of Saskatchewan (USask) Spring Convocation 2021.

The hard-working graduate achieved this while balancing the demands of being the president of the USask chapter of the Canadian Agri-Marketing Association (CAMA). A high achievement for any graduate, but especially for Dumont who switched paths in university.

Dumont started in the College of Arts and Science doing the pre-year required for entry to the College of Nursing.

“I realized that agriculture is something that I was truly interested in, and I love working outdoors,” said Dumont. “It made sense to go into a program that I’m passionate about. My interest in agriculture stemmed from the time I spent on my grandparents’ farm growing up. My dad, many family friends, and people I look up to also work in the ag industry.”

As a new AgBio student,

Dumont planted the seeds for success in university by getting involved.

“Getting a lot of experience through class labs, summer work, as well as the clubs I was involved in have all contributed to developing my knowledge, skills and leadership,” said Dumont.

Dumont was the president of CAMA for 2020-21, vice-president for 2019-20 and a member for 2018-19. She was also involved with the business case study team in the AgBiz club.

“CAMA enhanced my campus experience in many ways,” said Dumont. “It allowed me to expand

my personal network with people across North America, it improved my public speaking as well as my leadership and teamwork skills. I was able to meet and become closer with a lot of students. A lot of my close friends are those that I met through CAMA!”

Every year, the CAMA club creates a new agricultural product/service or researches an existing product that could benefit from better marketing. The club then creates a marketing plan to present at the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) competition. Dumont travelled to Kansas City, Mo., in 2019 for the competition and was scheduled to go to San Diego in 2020. The trip was cancelled due to the pandemic, but the club competed online in 2021. They presented on Haystack, a new online agricultural job matching service they created.

Haystack helps match employers of small ag operations with potential employees. When using the Haystack platform, both

the employer and the employee can filter and categorize their search to have a better chance of finding their ‘needle in a haystack.’

“Dealing with the pandemic and CAMA in the last year was definitely a learning curve,” said Dumont. “With everything being online, it was important for me to be approachable to new CAMA members. I also had to figure out how to manage the club alongside my classes. It’s hard to stop working remotely because you never really leave ‘work.’”

Dumont completed Mental Health First Aid, an evidence-based program designed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, at the USask Wellness Centre in February 2020. Participants learn to recognize a change in behaviour in others, respond with a confident conversation, and guide to appropriate resources and support.

“This program helped me look after my own mental health as well,” said Dumont.

In addition to learning Mental Health First Aid, Dumont made time each week in university to enjoy a stress-free activity.

“Setting a daily schedule can help with this,” she added.

The hard work and balance have paid off for the AgBio graduate, who is now working as a Crop Input Associate for Cargill.

“My current goals are to become an agronomist, and to be involved in whatever community I end up in,” said Dumont.

Dumont’s USask journey has taken her across The Bowl from Arts and Science to Agriculture and Bioresources, across North America with CAMA, and to her future as another successful AgBio alumnus.

“My AgBio experience was great,” she said. “It is such a welcoming college with professors and staff who want the best for you.”

Brett Makulowich is a communications co-ordinator in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources.

Navy chaplain completes doctorate aboard HMCS Calgary

JEFF KLASSEN

From growing up on a farm in Zimbabwe to serving on a Canadian warship, a chaplain on Her Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Calgary feels he has made all the right choices along the way.

Navy Lieutenant Dr. Wilson Gonese (DMin) grew up on a farm in Gutu, Zimbabwe. He received a calling from God and, after high school, told his parents he wanted to be a minister.

"At first it was not accepted because ministers were not paid well. My family wanted me to go into nursing or teaching—anything more secure—but I was convinced God was calling," said Gonese, who completed a doctorate from the University of Saskatchewan (USask) while serving overseas aboard HMCS Calgary.

For 13 years, Gonese served as a minister in the Reform Church, in several communities in Zimbabwe and Botswana. In 2007, with hopes of a better life, he and his wife and their two children took a one-way flight to Canada where he continued to work as a United Church Minister in Newfoundland in the communities of Burgeo, Springdale, and Carbonear.

"Moving to Canada from Africa was a huge transition. The cold weather, cultural shock, not knowing whether we will succeed or not," he said. "Still, the people of Newfound-

land are very friendly and welcoming so I had a very good time there."

In 2018, Wilson had another calling, to join the Canadian Armed Forces as a Chaplain.

"I wanted to serve the country alongside serving members. I looked at the men and women in uniform and I wanted to give them the support they need, to be there for them," he said.

In 2020, Gonese began the biggest adventure of his military career thus far; serving on HMCS Calgary providing moral and spiritual support for those on board. He is currently embarked with the ship on its deployment to the Indo-Asia Pacific and Middle East regions on Operations ARTEMIS and PROJECTION.

During this deployment, on March 9, while the ship was in the



Canadian Navy Chaplain Lieutenant Wilson Gonese aboard HMCS Calgary on deployment in the Pacific Ocean.

SUBMITTED

middle of the Pacific Ocean, Gonese successfully defended his doctoral thesis via a Zoom teleconferencing call. It is believed to be the first time a doctoral thesis has been defended on a Canadian warship, while deployed on an operation.

Gonese's thesis is entitled *Moving from loss and lament to hope and new beginnings*, and is a case study about his old community of Carbonear, and how they dealt with the closing of their church in 1990. Gonese was granted a Doctor of Ministry from St. Andrew's College through the Saskatoon Theological Union, affiliated with USask, during a virtual convocation ceremony on May 7.

His crew members keep approaching him and lovingly call him "Doctor Padre."

Gonese feels his journey has been a very positive one. He and his wife currently live in Victoria, while his daughter also serves in the Royal Canadian Navy on HMCS Charlottetown as a supply technician and his son is studying to become a neuroscientist in Newfoundland.

"It's exciting. Coming to Canada and joining the military were some of the best decisions I've made in my life," he said. ♥

Captain Jeff Klassen is a public affairs officer with Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Calgary.

USSU and DCC lead digital events during Pride Week

FROM PAGE 2

The University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) Pride Centre will lead a social media campaign on queer confessions, where 2SLGBTQ+ community members can share revelations on the queer experience. These anonymous confessions will be posted on the Pride Centre's Instagram and Facebook to show that "no matter what your identity or orientation are, those are important to you and the world needs to accept them," said Rene Clarke, USSU

Pride Centre co-ordinator and third-year psychology student.

The USSU Pride Centre is also planning a special video entry in the Saskatoon Virtual Pride Parade on Saturday, June 19. Clarke explained that the Pride Centre will extend its platform to current students and alumni who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) to talk about their experiences with Pride.

"When Pride comes around, we don't keep in mind how intersectional Pride itself can be. BIPOC voices truly matter, and must be at the forefront," Clarke said.

Over the last year, the USSU Pride Centre has pivoted from being an in-person campus hub to building community in a digital space, according to Clarke, who uses he/they pronouns. 2SLGBTQ+ students have kept in touch on the USSU Centres' Discord server, which has a Pride Centre drop-in channel accessible to USask undergraduate students.

Clarke noted that the queer campus community has felt much like a chosen family, where people can exist in a space knowing they have a home.

"We make sure that we're there for each other because we know what it's like not to have anybody, especially in a pandemic where many students are living back home with unsupportive family or roommates," said Clarke.

Finally, the Diefenbaker Canada Centre's (DCC) virtual exhibit 'Pride on the Prairies' is still live and available for the entire community. The exhibit explores the history of 2SLGBTQ+ activism and Pride celebrations in Saskatchewan from the 1970s to today.

"Individuals who might never

visit the DCC in person have access to this from their own homes and can further their understanding of the local queer communities at their own pace," said Helanna Gessner, curatorial, exhibits and collections manager at the DCC. "It is important to recognize the perseverance of activists on campus and across Saskatchewan that led to the annual Pride celebrations we enjoy today."

Lauryn Kronick is a communications officer in Teaching, Learning and Student Experience.

Rohel finds dual degrees the best of both worlds

 DONELLA HOFFMAN

After discovering his aptitude for math and physics in high school, Remington Rohel was up for the challenge of earning a university degree in engineering physics.

“It piqued my interest. I was looking at engineering and at physics and found engineering physics, which was perfect,” he said.

But in first-year university, Rohel discovered another area that fascinated him when he took his first computer science class and was immediately hooked.

“I’d never had any exposure to it whatsoever in high school and I just loved it.”

He found it fun to write code, test it, and problem-solve if it didn’t work.

Ultimately, Rohel chose to pursue a dual degree. He graduated this spring from the University of Saskatchewan (USask) with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering physics and a Bachelor of Science in computer science.

His cumulative average for his undergrad engineering studies is an impressive 94.66, earning him one of the two Governor General’s Silver Medals awarded during USask Spring Convocation. He also received the APEGS (Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan) Medal, as top graduate in the College of Engineering.

Rohel grew up on his family’s farm near Annaheim, a village about an hour and a half east of Saskatoon, and went to the K-12 Annaheim School where he was one of eight in his graduating class.

On the farm, he saw how his dad would tackle mechanical problems—assessing the situation and using what was on hand to find a solution—and Rohel said he carried that mindset into his

university studies.

“My dad is a big influence. He never takes anything into the shop to get fixed, it’s always our shop. He loves working with machines and when something breaks down he always just figures it out for himself,” Rohel said.

“Definitely, I think that lends itself to engineering. When you need to find an innovative solution to an immediate problem, just figure it out.”

Rohel initially chose to go to the University of British Columbia but after a year found it was too far from friends and family, and he missed Saskatchewan’s sunshine.

“I’m definitely not a fan of rain,” he said.

As he pursued his dual degree at USask, Rohel frequently had seven classes per term. But beyond his



Remington Rohel graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering (engineering physics) and a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science.

 SUBMITTED

schoolwork, he found time to play some campus rec sports—volleyball, basketball and badminton—and also spent time as software lead on the team developing the RADSAT-SK cube satellite, which will be Saskatchewan’s first satellite in space. He also participated in the Canada-Norway Sounding Rocket (CanNoRock) program, spending a week in Norway in early 2020.

In future, Rohel said getting a master’s degree isn’t out of the question, and he would like to further pursue his interest in space, but he’s not sure yet what that path looks like.

He currently works at SuperDARN (The Super Dual Auroral Radar Network) Canada, which is headquartered at USask, assisting in the operations and development of radars used to study the ionosphere.

One of his engineering physics professors, Dr. Glenn Hussey (PhD), who’s also part of the SuperDARN team, had suggested Rohel apply for the job, confident he had the diverse

skill set it needed: instrument and electronics hardware design interfaced with control software.

“Remington clearly stood out as a bright guy. If you give him a new concept, he can synthesize it and immediately see the bigger picture,” said Hussey, who also noted Rohel’s kindness and willingness to help his classmates.

Dr. Kathryn McWilliams (PhD), director of SuperDARN Canada, said Rohel is well-suited to the diverse work at SuperDARN, which involves anything from designing and building electronics systems, to climbing radar towers at the sites, and from advanced data processing to teaching the next generation of trainees.

“We’re really happy with his technical skills and we’re lucky to welcome him to the team.”

Donella Hoffman is the communications officer in the USask College of Engineering.



Huskies football running back Isaac Rogers (44 above) received a Bachelor of Arts (honours) degree in anthropology during USask's 2021 virtual Spring Convocation week celebrations.

GETMYPHOTO.CA

Anthropology perfect fit for Huskie football player

SHANNON BOKLASCHUK

When Isaac Rogers began his studies in 2016 at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), he enrolled in a “little bit of everything.”

Rogers' academic path became clearer, however, after taking an anthropology course taught by Dr. Pamela Downe (PhD), a professor in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology in USask's College of Arts and Science. The course inspired him to undertake several years of studies in the department, culminating in the receipt of his Bachelor of Arts (honours) degree in anthropology during USask's 2021 Spring Convocation.

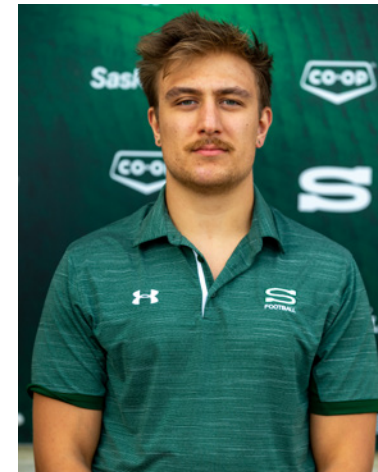
“I really appreciated the size of

the department. It allowed me to get to know the professors, as well as my classmates, really well,” he said.

Rogers, who is from Prince George, B.C., skillfully juggled his academic endeavours with his athletic pursuits as a Huskie athlete, playing both running back and fullback with the USask football team throughout his five years as a student. He was an Academic All-Canadian, a U Sports designation used to describe exceptional student-athletes who achieve an academic standing of 80 per cent or higher while taking a full course load and playing on a university varsity team.

“I really enjoyed being around the team, whatever it was that we were doing,” Rogers said. “Game days were great, especially at home—such as the homecoming-themed games. Playing in front of the large crowds was a bonus and they were always fun. I have really enjoyed just being around the team, training or travelling. Building relationships with the guys is honestly the best part.”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rogers' final season of competition with the Huskies was cancelled. However, his team was able to do “some very limited training,” he said, with mandatory



masking and limits on the number of people allowed on the field.

“It was harder; we were split up differently than normal and we never knew when we would be shut down,” he said. “We played it by ear week-to-week. Usually, by the beginning of the season, you know the names of the majority of your teammates. But, this year, I really did not get to know the new guys that were on defence because of how the groups were split.”

Despite the COVID-19 safety precautions—which also resulted in most USask courses being taught remotely in 2020-21—Rogers looks back at his undergraduate experience with fondness. He said USask does a great job of fostering a community “that is conducive for relationship building,” and he has built relationships “in every sphere” at the university, whether through sport or classes.

During the past academic year, Rogers completed multiple senior-level courses and authored an honours essay that focused on changes in livelihood during the 20th century for Indigenous people in Northern Alberta. His essay was based on interviews with Elders of the Bigstone Cree Nation, conducted by Indigenous researchers in the Wabasca-Desmarais (Alberta) area in 1968 and 1976. The project was supervised by Dr. Clinton Westman (PhD), head of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology.

“The interviews discuss spirituality, subsistence, treaties and everyday life in the area. I chose to focus on the treaties and subsistence methods and how they interacted throughout the 20th century,” Rogers said.

“I chose this topic because of a class I had with Professor Westman that focused on Indigenous place-making. The course materials were really interesting. I found it easy to work with Professor Westman in that course, and I knew that he would make a good supervisor for the honours essay. I was wanting to do the essay since my second year, and his materials were the right fit.”

Outside of his academic and athletic pursuits, Rogers enjoyed volunteering at the Bridge City Bicycle Co-op (BCBC). The volunteer-run, non-profit co-operative offers a drop-in workspace, tools and supplies, as well as bicycle maintenance education.

“Donated bikes would get fixed up and would be provided to youth that did not have one,” he said. “I recommend that if you have a bike that you are considering throwing out, donate it to the BCBC. They will fix it up and someone in need will get a bike.”

With his newly minted degree, Rogers is now looking ahead to the future. He will attend law school to study Indigenous law “as well as new rehabilitative court systems for individuals who would benefit from restorative justice.”

He also has some advice for students who are just beginning their studies at USask.

“It is important to communicate with the people around you. There are a lot of people having a similar experience, doing the same things,” he said. “Get to know the people in your department, whether they are students or staff; it is really beneficial in the long run.”

Shannon Boklaschuk is a communications officer in the College of Arts and Science.



Huskies forward Bailee Bourassa of Weyburn scores a shootout goal during Canada West conference action in 2019.

Bourassa balances nursing, master's and hockey

 JAMES SHEWAGA

There are masters of multi-tasking and then there are graduate student-athletes like Bailee Bourassa.

The 22-year-old from Weyburn is working 12-hour shifts in Saskatoon's Jim Pattison Children's Hospital while taking her first year of the Master of Nursing program at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), all while training largely on her own for the promise of a post-pandemic resumption of Huskie hockey in 2021/22.

But for the four-time U Sports Academic All-Canadian (awarded for earning an average of more

than 80 per cent while taking full course loads) the passion to play her fifth and final season of eligibility with the Huskie women's hockey team is worth the wait.

"It is definitely quite busy, but there is just something about finishing my fifth year as a Huskie that is a huge deal to me, and to be able to do that would be pretty special," said Bourassa, who graduated with her Bachelor of Nursing degree in June of 2020 before entering the master's program. "I am just really excited for next year—if we do have a season—getting back to the

routine with my teammates.

"One of the things that I miss most is just being able to go to the rink, between practices, or after practice or before practice, just hanging out with everyone at the rink. I really miss that."

In an interesting twist this year, Bourassa has indeed returned to the rink—USask's state-of-the-art Merlis Belsher Place—albeit in a new role as her hockey and healthcare worlds collide. With Huskie Athletics on hold, the multipurpose facility was temporarily transformed by the Saskatchewan Health



Authority into a potential field hospital, and now houses a mass immunization clinic during the ongoing pandemic. Swapping her hockey gear for personal protective equipment, Bourassa is helping deliver vaccinations as a registered nurse, in the home of the Huskies.


"They were looking for nurses to pick up shifts immunizing, so I picked up a few shifts at Merlis Belsher Place and it was mind-blowing to go in there and see

what it looked like," said Bourassa. "The woman running the clinic while I was orientating asked if I needed a tour, and I said 'I don't really need one, this was my home before you guys moved in!'"

Playing her fourth season of Huskie hockey in the first year for Merlis Belsher Place in 2019/20 was the highlight of Bourassa's career so far. The 5-foot-8 forward led her team in scoring with 12 goals and 19 points in 28 games for the third-place Huskies (17-10-3-3) and was named a Canada West conference all-star for the first time.

"My last season was probably my favourite year as a Huskie athlete, and moving into Merlis Belsher Place was one of the most surreal experiences and one of the best things to happen as a Huskie," she said. "We just appreciate that building so much. And I just had a lot of confidence in my fourth year and I was really excited to keep that going into my fifth and final year. I felt like I was really missing out on something big here, so that is why I am determined to come back for my fifth year. I don't know how it is going to look, but I hope it is going to be a good one."

As she continues her graduate program studies and prepares for a hopeful return to the ice with the Huskies, Bourassa is also looking forward to the future, and a rewarding career in nursing. After spending the past year working with children, Bourassa knows she has found her calling in pediatrics.

"I love it at the Children's Hospital," said Bourassa. "I just feel so much more comfortable and confident as a nurse and I feel so much more independent than I was a year ago. There have been a few experiences that have really given me a different outlook on life. Seeing how those kids fight through some of the stuff that they go through, it is amazing to me. You see some kids at their worst, but when you actually nurse them back to health and see them doing better, that is truly something that I love to experience. I couldn't imagine working anywhere else right now." 

USask faculty recognized for exemplary teamwork

RESEARCH PROFILE AND IMPACT

The University of Saskatchewan's (USask) Office of the Vice-President Research has honoured two recipients, Dr. Pamela Downe (PhD) and Dr. Carrie Bourassa (PhD), and their respective research teams, with the inaugural Publicly Engaged Scholarship Team Award this year.

The award recognizes teams made up of USask faculty, post-doctoral and graduate students, working in collaboration with community partners that have inspired and instigated social action in the community through research, scholarly and artistic work.

In selecting awardees, the selection committee considered the evidence of impact of the teams' work on social outcomes, the quality of engagement with communities and students in the creation of social innovation, and the contributions of the team to scholarly literature and/or professional organizations.

Both of this year's award winners demonstrate the important social outcomes that can be found in research work and in partnering with the community, according to letters penned in support of each nominee. The winners were honoured with an online celebration and awards ceremony organized by the Office of the Vice-President Research, due to the current challenges of COVID-19.

Dr. Downe and Prairie Harm Reduction

Downe is a professor in the USask College of Arts and Science in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology. She has been involved with numerous efforts to publicly engage scholarship in the

Saskatoon community, through mentoring and engaging students in community-based academic work and most notably through her long-standing partnership with Prairie Harm Reduction (PHR, formerly AIDS Saskatoon).

"I am most proud of the collaborative teamwork with Prairie Harm Reduction. PHR and I have worked together for over 15 years, addressing some of the major questions related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic here in Saskatchewan," said Downe. "Ensuring that research is relevant, rigorous, timely, and useful to partnering communities is paramount."

"Dozens of staff, hundreds of people who access the services, as well as students and fellow researchers have given me the honour of their time, participation, and collaboration."

As part of her remarks on May 31, Downe thanked current PHR Executive Director Jason Mercredi and former Executive Director Nicole White for their leadership and support, and acknowledged the USask researchers and colleagues with whom she regularly works: Dr. Karen Lawson (PhD), Dr. Sylvia Abonyi (PhD), Dr. Susan Tupper (PhD), Dr. Angela Lieveise (PhD), and Dr. Allison Muri (PhD).

Downe's main academic focus is medical anthropology and she has completed extensive academic work on infectious disease and epidemic

ethnography, pathography, as well as cross-cultural research on maternal health and kin-care.

"I am especially grateful to work in a department that has led the way in advancing interdisciplinary research on infectious diseases through community-to-classroom initiatives in addition to Truth and Reconciliation initiatives," said Downe.

Downe brought attention to the Saskatchewan HIV/AIDS epidemic through a longitudinal study conducted in partnership with PHR.

Downe's collaboration with PHR led to the 2021 publication of an ethnographical analysis of urban Indigenous experience and caregiving practices, titled *Collective Care: Indigenous Motherhood, Family & HIV/AIDS*. The award was given to Downe and PHR in recognition of their accomplishments and contributions to the wider Saskatchewan community through scholarly work.

Dr. Bourassa and team

Bourassa is a professor in the USask College of Medicine in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology. Bourassa has completed extensive community-based research work focused on Indigenous health and well-being.

"I am honoured and humbled to be a member of this team and to



Dr. Pamela Downe (PhD) is a professor in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology in the College of Arts and Science.

SUBMITTED



Dr. Carrie Bourassa (PhD) is a professor in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology in the College of Medicine.

SUBMITTED

serve Indigenous communities," said Bourassa. "This award is about service to the community partners that we serve and an incredible team at Morning Star Lodge, including the Elders and Knowledge Keepers that guide the work."

Bourassa is an administrative leader at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health, where she has served as scientific director since 2017. She successfully created and launched the Network Environments of Indigenous Health Research national program, and secured more than \$99 million in research funding.

Bourassa demonstrates her significant impact on the wider community along with her research team, specifically in Indigenous Peoples' health, with a goal of

improving and promoting the health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people of Canada.

"Morning Star Lodge is a mentorship lab started in 2010 at the direction of Indigenous communities," said Bourassa. "I was asked to create a safe space for both Indigenous communities and Indigenous students who are interested in Indigenous health research. The lab started out in a small space, but we have continued to grow and develop relationships with many communities and partners."

In their decision, the awards selection committee specifically highlighted Bourassa's significant contributions and impact made with and for Indigenous communities, the breadth of her academic achievement and early career success, and her national reputation. ♥



SARTY'S LAB TESTS TECHNOLOGY FOR MRI IN SPACE

✍ JAMES SHEWAGA

Thirty thousand feet at a time, Dr. Gordon Sarty (PhD) is closing in on his dream of putting magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology into space.

Sarty, the head of the Department of Psychology and interim chair of biomedical engineering at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), recently returned from Ottawa after completing the final round of in-flight testing of a unique lightweight ankle-sized MRI designed to monitor the health of astronauts on future space missions. Working with the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), Sarty's research team successfully tested the MRI technology on April 26-27 aboard a National Research Council jet that soared above 30,000 feet for a series of steep climbs and dives designed to simulate the zero-gravity conditions of space flight.

"It creates an environment that is similar to space flight, and that moves you up that technology readiness level ladder," said Sarty. "We demonstrated maybe 80 per cent of the hardware for a space flight MRI on the jet, so the big thing that we proved here is that our hardware is robust. We did not have any failures at all, nothing broke, and the software worked as expected. We achieved what we set out to achieve, so that was good."



Dr. Gordon Sarty (PhD), left, and graduate students Pallavi Bohidar (at the computer) and Farnaz Zohourparvaz (front right), with the MRI between them, prior to takeoff on the test flight.

USask graduate students Faezeh Ebadollahi, Hammed Ejalonibu, Pallavi Bohidar and Farnaz Zohourparvaz from Sarty's Space MRI lab research group joined him on the test flights.

"We had to take precautions because of COVID, so that was a bit of a challenge," said Sarty, who flew his own Cessna aircraft to Ottawa for the tests. "We all had to wear

masks and we were not allowed to float around the cabin as much as you normally would."

Sarty plans to present his research and proposal for a wrist-sized MRI on the next lunar mission—a project Canada has committed \$150-million to through the new Lunar Exploration Accelerator Program (LEAP)—at upcoming conferences hosted by

the space agency. In the meantime, Sarty's team is back in the lab working to improve the imaging from their MRI.

"We have to add components to improve the images from the MRI that we get and we are working on that continuously," said Sarty, whose research is supported by grants from the CSA and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. "We discovered things that were unexpected, so we have to figure out what nature is telling us. We are also working on four other different MRI prototypes in various stages of development, and they all use different approaches to get an image."

Ultimately, Sarty's team is hoping to test their novel MRI technology aboard the International Space Station, the next step in a journey they hope will ultimately take their project to the Moon and, eventually, Mars.

"We have been trying to get to the space station and we have been working with the space agency for a number of years on that, so these are really steps along that path," said Sarty. "The objective with this project is to get MRI into space, and that means to the Moon and Mars."

With the latest signs of success, Sarty is confident his research team's approach will work to put an MRI in space.

"It's just a matter of time and money." 🍀