



July 2026 - Issue 102

Discovery Digest is a glimpse into how University of Saskatchewan research, scholarly and artistic works are making a difference for Saskatchewan, Canada and the world. Curated by the Research Profile and Impact unit, Office of the Vice-President Research. [Feedback welcome!](#)

Applications are now open for TEDxUniversity of Saskatchewan 2027!



Do you have an idea worth spreading? Apply to speak or perform at TEDxUniversityofSaskatchewan 2027!

The theme of “Our Next Chapter” calls for hope-inspiring ideas and future-building work that is courageously working towards a better world. **Apply to be a speaker or performer before July 31, 2026.** [Learn more and apply!](#)

This Month's Stories



[USask places high in world university rankings](#)

The University of Saskatchewan (USask) ranked 411th in the world in the 2027 QS World University Rankings, placing it in the upper echelons of all the universities included in the ranking.

This year's QS World University Rankings evaluated more than 8,800 institutions and included 1,504 in this year's rankings. The rankings are based on nine different indicators across five categories.

USask placed highest in the Sustainability indicator, ranking 168th in the world in that category.

[VIDO signs international agreement with ERINHA to strengthen global pandemic preparedness](#)

The Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) at USask has signed a new international agreement with the European Research Infrastructure on Highly Pathogenic Agents (ERINHA), formalizing a partnership that will make VIDO the network's North American hub.

The partnership will support work on infectious disease threats that can affect human and animal health, food security, and economies around the world, underscoring the value of trusted networks in preparing for health challenges that do not stop at borders. The event was part of an extended mission by the Government of Saskatchewan to Europe.



[Unprecedented gift will advance pediatric research at USask](#)

To investigate the early origins of chronic disease, Hospitals of Regina Foundation has made a significant investment in pediatrics at the USask College of Medicine through the establishment of a new clinical research chair.

The new Hospitals of Regina Foundation Pediatric Chair in the Origins of Health and Disease is supported by a \$4 million investment, the largest single gift ever provided by the Foundation to a research project.

"The Hospitals of Regina Foundation's generous gift will accelerate vital research at USask into how early life shapes lifelong health. We sincerely thank the Foundation for their vision and partnership in advancing knowledge that will benefit children and families across Saskatchewan and beyond," said **Vince Bruni-Bossio**, USask's president and vice-chancellor.

[New USask AI research improves how computers interpret the world](#)

Researchers at USask have developed a tool to make AI that sees the real world – from applications in medical procedures to self-driving cars – faster and more efficient.

The paper was published at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers/Computer Vision Foundation (IEEE/CVF) Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR) 2026. The conference is considered one of the highest-impact publication venues in the world.

The paper was written by recent Master of Science graduate **Tzu-Ling Liu** and co-authors **Dr. Ian Stavness (PhD)**, the head of the USask's Department of Computer Science, and **Dr. Mrigank Rochan (PhD)**, an assistant professor in the department.



[USask researcher opens doors for students in engineering](#)

Dr. Reisha Peters (PhD), an assistant professor in the College of Engineering's Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering at USask, wants to introduce students to a side of engineering they may not be familiar with.



“Engineering is often seen as a very math-heavy and science-heavy field. We see engineers in the public who like to work on rockets or bridges, but engineering is more than that,” said Peters. “Engineers work to provide clean water to communities, or they work to develop prosthetic limbs. We want to try and highlight that engineers work on a team to help society.”

Her latest project is a group activity kit — or “lockbox” — that is a teaching tool that encourages students to work together to solve puzzles, problems, and riddles that help them to develop skills like communication, teamwork, and creativity.

The project recently received more than \$238,000 from the New Frontiers Research Fund (NFRF) exploration grant to improve the lockbox design and strengthen the delivery to students.

Looking for more research stories? [Visit Discovery Digest online.](#)

[USask research: What’s the buzz about mosquitos this year?](#)

With mosquito populations peaking well above the 10-year average in Saskatchewan and double last year’s count at this time, the buzz across Saskatchewan is how bad will it get, and what we can do to help enjoy our time outside.



Some of Western Canada’s leading researchers in the field have offered tips and tricks of the trade for getting through a challenging mosquito season. Providing insight are **Dr. Sean Prager (PhD)** of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources and **Dr. Emily Jenkins (PhD, DVM)** of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine with the USask Insect Research Facility. Also weighing in are former USask post-doctoral research colleagues **Dr. Jumari Snyman (PhD)**, now a research associate in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Alberta, and USask adjunct professor **Dr. Loki Snyman (PhD)**, the curator of Invertebrate Zoology at the Royal Alberta Museum.



[“It’s all about the kids”: USask law professor receives community impact award](#)

Professor Jamesy Patrick with the USask College of Law is this year’s recipient of the Publicly Engaged Scholarship Team Award (PESTA), given annually to a member of the USask faculty to recognize collaboration and achievement with students, faculty and partners to create an impact in the community.

Patrick proposed a course on child protection law to the College of Law as a sessional lecture in 2021.

Since that time, Patrick has become a full faculty member at USask, the child protection law course is always completely full with eager-to-learn students, and Patrick has worked to build connections between her students and the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) and individual communities.

[Building researchers, mentors and leaders: Roy recognized for outstanding mentorship](#)

Each year, the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) awards the Distinguished Graduate Mentorship (DGM) award to a graduate faculty member who demonstrates exceptional leadership in supporting graduate students, both in academic settings and beyond.



The 2025-26 DGM award recipient is **Dr. Chanchal Roy (PhD)** from the Department of Computer Science. The award is the highest honour a faculty member can receive for graduate mentorship excellence at USask.

Since joining USask in 2009, Roy has supervised or co-supervised over 100 undergraduate students, graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. "I believe that this is the most of any faculty member with this amount of experience in the 50-year history of our department," said **Dr. Ian McQuillan (PhD)**, professor and graduate chair of the Department of Computer Science.



[Tick Talk: USask researcher's tips for limiting risk](#)

You don't have to tell hikers, golfers and dog walkers that tick risk has increased this spring in Saskatchewan.

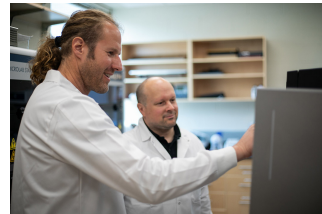
Dr. Maarten Voordouw (PhD), an associate professor in the Department of Veterinary Microbiology in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN) at USask leads a research group that studies the ecology of ticks and tick-

borne diseases in Canada, such as Lyme disease. He sat down to discuss the risks and offer tips for tick prevention.

[USask facility expands genomics services nationwide](#)

USask is expanding access to advanced genomics tools for researchers through its new Omics Resource Centre (ORC).

Based at the WCVN, this specialized centre has been operating since fall 2025. It's already supporting projects across the USask campus and beyond, offering genetic sequencing, research consultation and sample processing resources—all aimed to make genomics services more accessible.



"The focus of ORC is to bring the latest technologies to animal research and other research areas," said genomics laboratory manager **Dr. Martin Mau (PhD)**, who leads the facility.



[USask Professor Emeritus appointed to the Order of Canada](#)



[JSGS professor prepares students to lead purposefully in the public service](#)



[Inside VIDO's swine research to help protect pigs, producers and food security](#)

USask Signature Series Podcast - Season 2

The USask Signature Series Podcast is an exploration and celebration of the interesting and the innovative, the fun and the fantastic, the cutting-edge and the creative side of USask research.

You'll hear from USask experts across a variety of disciplines and research areas as they tackle the questions and opportunities the world needs today.

Check out the podcast on Spotify, Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts!

Here are the newest episodes of the USask Signature Series:

- S2E12 - [How does USask research create impact we can see and feel?](#)
- S2E11 - [What do we need to know about nuclear energy?](#)
- S2E10 - [What should your children be eating for lunch?](#)

If you have an idea for an episode of the podcast, please email research.communications@usask.ca.



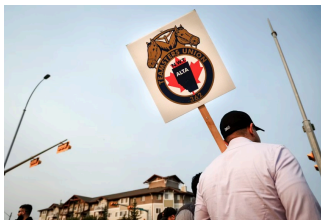
Stay connected with USask research news

Make sure to follow USask Research on Instagram at [@usaskresearch](#), and on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter/X](#) to stay in-the-know, with exciting research news delivered right to your newsfeed. Don't forget to also follow [@VPR_USask](#) and [@USask](#) on Twitter/X for more of the latest research and university news.

Use the hashtag **#USaskResearch** when sharing USask-related research findings, publications or achievements on social media.



In *The Conversation*



[The right to strike is constitutionally protected — a new Senate report is looking for a workaround](#)

By: **Dr. Charles Smith (PhD)**, USask College of Arts and Science, and **Dr. Andrew Stevens (PhD)**, University of Regina

When Prime Minister Mark Carney and the Liberal Party of Canada ran for re-election in 2025, they made a series of commitments to Canadians promising new investments

and good, well-paying jobs for workers.

Yet, one year into office, the Liberal government seems more committed to building a strong economy on the backs of workers rather than for them. In the past six months, the federal government has doubled down on an aggressive form of anti-unionism that threatens to upend the rights of workers and their unions.

The latest is the “Keep Canada Moving” report released by the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications.

Being involved in *The Conversation* is a unique and renowned avenue for sharing research and study with both colleagues and the public. We strongly encourage researchers to explore *The Conversation* as a way to share and distribute their expertise! Feel free to reach out to research.communications@usask.ca if you have questions.

Upcoming events

Early Bird Registration - PAW 2026

Early bird registration is now open for the People Around the World (PAW) 2026 International Congress at USask!

Take advantage of discounted rates and join researchers, scholars, industry partners, government representatives and community members for this dynamic three-day event at USask Oct. 20-22, 2026.



Students are eligible for discounted registration rates. To access your student discount code, please email international.office@usask.ca with the following information: Name, NSID, Student Number, College and Program, and Supervisor.

Learn more and register [here](#).

Have any upcoming research events?

Please email research.communications@usask.ca with your event title, information and any links links for registration to include in the Discovery Digest.

Information and Community for Researchers

Pre-order Orange Shirt Day t-shirts beginning July 13

Sept. 30 marks Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a time for learning, reflection, and conversation about the history and ongoing impacts of the residential school system. Orange shirts featuring a design by Alexis Blackbird, a Saskatoon-based Anishinaabe (Odawa) artist and member of Walpole Island First Nation, are now available for pre-order through Shop USask. Youth sizing options and group discounts are available.

Learn more about the artist, order deadlines, and where proceeds will be directed at <https://shop.usask.ca/orange-shirt-day>.

Security awareness sessions

Do you have questions about protecting yourself and your devices when travelling internationally? **Lisa Belhumeur**, Senior Research Security Specialist, provides tailored travel security awareness sessions for researchers and administrators travelling internationally on university business. Travel security addresses Canadian research security policies, international funding requirements, national security obligations (such as sanctions and export controls), IT security, and some limited personal safety considerations.

Lisa offers tailored travel security briefings that consider who is travelling, where they are going, and what they will be doing. Attention is paid to [higher-risk destinations as defined by the Government of Canada](#). The intent is to equip travellers with practical information so they can make informed decisions and recognize situations that may warrant caution or follow-up.

Travelers will be directed to engage with ICT to receive best practices for device security when traveling.

To request a briefing, please email Lisa at: Belhumeur.lisa@usask.ca.

AI literacy resources expand with a new faculty-focused tutorial

Artificial intelligence is shaping teaching, research and administrative work at USask. Staff and faculty are encouraged to explore [USask's general AI literacy tutorial](#), which introduces foundational concepts. A new faculty-focused tutorial builds on this resource and supports instructors as they consider how AI may or may not be applicable in teaching and assessment. The tutorial is designed to be completed in stages, allowing modules to be

undertaken as time permits, with each module taking no more than 30 minutes. Access the new faculty tutorial at the [Canvas link here](#).

If you have any important information for USask researchers, please contact research.communications@usask.ca!

Submitting to Discovery Digest

If you would like to submit a research-focused event or news item for consideration for Discovery Digest, please submit a link and a description of no more than 150 words to research.communications@usask.ca with the subject line "Submission – Discovery Digest," along with the month and year you are submitting for.

Please indicate whether your submission is a recommendation for a news item, event or information for researchers. If you would also like to submit a photo, please make sure it is a 3:2 aspect ratio image.

The Discovery Digest goes out on or as close to the 15th of each month as possible. **Please ensure any submissions are sent in by at least the 8th of each month to be considered for inclusion.**

In the news

- July 9 – The Western Producer – [In Rigas we trust: soil scientist wins Les Henry Award](#)
 - July 5 – CBC News – [Lily beetles infest Saskatchewan gardens, forcing people to rip out whole plants](#)
 - June 29 – Saskatoon StarPhoenix – [U.S. agriculture giant Cargill could become Canada's fourth-biggest grain handler with new deal](#)
 - June 29 – The Sydney Morning Herald – [The surprising nutritional benefits that prove you should give peas a chance](#)
 - June 29 – Saskatoon StarPhoenix, Regina Leader-Post – ['Unprecedented' gift aims to advance pediatric research in Saskatchewan](#)
 - June 28 – CBC News, Regina Leader-Post, Saskatoon StarPhoenix – [As wet spring breeds mosquito explosion in Sask., experts warn of 'bad midge season'](#)
 - June 28 – The Western Producer – [Portable PathoScan device diagnoses crop diseases in the field](#)
 - June 17 – CTV News – ['Our infrastructure is unique': VIDO embraces new global partnership](#)
 - June 16 – SaskToday – [Summer Field Day showcases latest livestock research](#)
-

Banner image photo credit: **Summer is Fleeting** - Photo by **Lindsay Carlson**, PhD student, Department of Biology, College of Arts and Science

Images of Research 2026 - *From the Field* winner

Blink, and you'll miss summer in the Arctic. The pace of life is frenetic, even manic, to make the most of the abundant but ephemeral resources. The same is true for the scientists who

work there: we make the most of every moment in our short field season. I took a break from cleaning nets after dinner to watch two parasitic jaegers (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) fight over the remains of an Arctic char (*Salvelinus alpinus*). The purple saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*) hadn't even been in bloom the day before, but it was nearly time for me, and the birds, to fly south again.



BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

We want your feedback! [What do you think of Discovery Digest?](#)

You are receiving this email because you either subscribed manually to Discovery Digest or were a former subscriber to USask Monthly Research Update. Questions? Comments? Send an email to [Research Profile and Impact](#).
