

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE UPDATE

August 3, 2021

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College of Arts and Science offers innovative new courses for 2021 Fall Term

As the University of Saskatchewan community **prepares for the 2021 Fall Term**, the College of Arts and Science is offering a wide variety of exciting and innovative new courses to undergraduate and graduate students. The College of Arts and Science is the largest and most academically diverse college at USask, with 21 departments, 50 degree programs and 16 certificate programs. As outlined in its **plan to 2025**, the college seeks to equip its students with the skills, knowledge and cultural competencies needed for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.



COVID-19 experiences inspire new USask course on music and wellbeing

A University of Saskatchewan researcher who studies the connections between music and wellbeing has witnessed firsthand the positive impact that music can have on people's lives during times of crisis. During the 2020-21 academic year, when the USask campus closed to the public and classes were taught remotely to help keep students, faculty and staff safe, Dr. Jennifer Lang (PhD) received emails and testimonials from students who spoke about the significant role music played in their lives during the pandemic, whether it was "connecting them to a greater community—even online—beyond their bedroom walls or serving as an emotional or spiritual outlet."



Bird collection a feather in the cap for USask ornithologist

A stuffed specimen of a now-extinct passenger pigeon dating back to 1875 is one of the highlights of the bird collection amassed over more than a century at the University of Saskatchewan. "There are estimated to be 1,500 stuffed passenger pigeon specimens at institutions around the world, but I'm not sure how many other Canadian universities have specimens—certainly not very many. We are lucky to have one," said ornithologist Dr. Karen Wiebe (PhD), a faculty member in the Department of Biology in the College of Arts and Science.



USask psychology department unveils new name

The Department of Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan is now the Department of Psychology and Health Studies. The new name formalizes the department's relationship with the undergraduate **Health Studies Program**, which has been led by Department of Psychology faculty members since launching in 2015.



'Water is the elixir of life': New USask certificate program focuses on water science

A new University of Saskatchewan certificate program is focusing on one of Earth's most important natural resources: water. "The word I use in class is that water is the elixir of life," said Dr. Krys Chutko (PhD), a faculty member in the Department of Geography and Planning in the College of Arts and Science. The new **Certificate in**

Water Science will offer students theoretical and practical training in hydrologic science.



New USask Certificate in Urban Design offers deeper understanding of built environments

How can cities, neighbourhoods, and public and private institutions be built in ways that are sustainable, user-centred and aesthetically pleasing? And how can design principles be used by today's students and professionals to create a better world for tomorrow? Those are some of the fascinating topics that will be explored in a new

University of Saskatchewan certificate program that will draw on diverse subject areas—with a focus on the visual arts and urban planning—to provide students with a deeper understanding of built environments.



Music professor named interim associate dean student affairs

Dr. Darrin Oehlerking (DMA) has been appointed as the interim associate dean student affairs in the College of Arts and Science for a period of one year. Oehlerking, the conductor of the University of Saskatchewan Wind Orchestra and an associate professor in the Department

of Music, will take on his new role from July 1, 2021 until June 30, 2022.



USask researcher discovers tiny beetles cause big threat to woodland caribou

Threats to Canada's endangered woodland caribou can be traced back to spruce budworm infestations and salvage logging, says a paper co-authored by University of Saskatchewan researcher Dr. Philip McLoughlin (PhD). "Spruce budworms kill the forest, which then leads to a flush of vegetation of benefit to moose. More moose means more wolves, and caribou don't do well when there's a lot of wolves around," said McLoughlin, an associate professor of biology in the College of Arts and Science.



Caterpillars borrow weapons from viruses in battle against parasitic wasps: USask research

New research found caterpillars defend themselves against parasitic wasps using weapons also found in another enemy—viruses. Exactly how the caterpillars are winning this tiny evolutionary arms race is the subject of an article just published in the journal *Science* by an international research team, including scientists from the University of Saskatchewan.



Important environmental issues tackled in two timely new USask courses

Two timely new courses to be offered at the University of Saskatchewan this fall will address environmental and sustainability issues of global importance. The courses—GEOL 498: Geoscience of Green Energy and the Digital

Economy and GEOG 898: Social Hydrology—will be taught to undergraduate and graduate students during the 2021 Fall Term.



USask museum's tour focuses on fossils found in local buildings

Did you know that Saskatoon's downtown area is filled with fossilized creatures that are much older than the dinosaurs? This summer, the Museum of Natural Sciences at the University of Saskatchewan is encouraging residents to get outside and explore this fascinating history. Dr. Erica Bird (PhD) is one of the collaborators on the **On Safari Downtown Saskatoon Tour**, which highlights local buildings that were built with Tyndall Stone. This type of sedimentary rock built up over time, trapping the remains of plants and animals that were preserved as fossils inside it.



20/21 Vision online conference to be held from Aug. 16 - 22

20/21 Vision: Speculating in Literature and Film in Canada is an international online conference based at the University of Saskatchewan. It will gather together scholars, authors and members of the public who are interested in speculative writing in Canada. Featured speakers include Cherie Dimaline, Wayde Compton, Saleema Nawaz, Anne Stone, Tonia Laird, Iris Hauser, Laura St. Pierre, Marlene Goldman and Dwayne Brenna. See the **conference program** for full details.



Examining how therapy dogs support wellbeing

A University of Saskatchewan sociology researcher is studying how St. John Ambulance therapy dog-handler teams can further support people dealing with substance use concerns and/or mental health concerns. Dr. Holly McKenzie's new research project is supported by a \$140,000 Banting Post-Doctoral Fellowship. McKenzie is a community-engaged and patient-oriented researcher and has been working alongside her Great Dane, Opal, who is a therapy dog in training.



Cree actor receives new USask student drama award

University of Saskatchewan drama student Christopher Krug-Iron is the first recipient of a new award named for Prof. Emeritus Henry Woolf. Krug-Iron was announced as the inaugural winner of the \$1,000 Henry Woolf Bursary in Drama at a virtual event celebrating the Department of Drama's 75th anniversary on June 19. The Henry Woolf Bursary in Drama was created last year in honour of Woolf, a retired faculty member and former head of the Department of Drama who has profoundly shaped Saskatchewan's theatre community as an actor, teacher, director and playwright.



NSERC Create for Water Security leaves lasting impact

As a unique water security training program wraps up at the University of Saskatchewan, the program's leaders look back on the past six years as an overwhelming success. "The students went beyond even what I and the rest of the team members had imagined," said Dr. Cherie Westbrook (PhD), director of the NSERC CREATE for Water Security. The NSERC CREATE for Water Security is a USask-led initiative funded

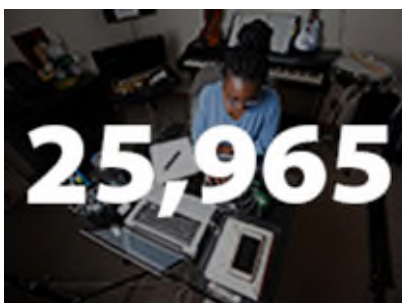
through the Collaborative Research and Training Experience (CREATE) program of the federal Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).



Number of First Nations people living with IBD in Saskatchewan has doubled

The number of First Nations people in Saskatchewan living with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) more than doubled from 1999 to 2016, according to research recently published by University of Saskatchewan community health and epidemiology researchers. The IBD Among Indigenous Peoples Research Team includes

researchers from the College of Arts and Science.



By the numbers

25,965: Between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021, **the number of students attending the University of Saskatchewan totalled 25,965**, which is an overall increase of one per cent compared to the previous year and the highest enrolment to date. For more information about how USask is measuring and tracking

its progress in fulfilling the goals and aspirations of the University Plan, visit the **[Reporting page on leadership.usask.ca](#)**.

In the Media

Bridges: **[Costumes, collaboration and community mark Beverley Kobelsky's theatre career](#)**
(with Beverley Kobelsky, Department of Drama, July 29)

CTV Saskatoon: **[Climate change has arrived in Sask. And it's 'ugly'](#)** (with Dr. John Pomeroy, PhD, Department of Geography and Planning, July 22)

Saskatoon StarPhoenix: [Indigenous fire teams in Sask. aim for bigger role after B.C. blazes](#)

(with Dr. James Waldram, PhD, Department of Indigenous Studies/Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, July 11)

Arts and Science Update is sent to faculty and staff in the College of Arts and Science.

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