



INDIGENOUS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

March 13, 2025

Honouring Indigenous USask students for their
academic achievement, community engagement,
leadership, research and resiliency.

Congratulations to this year's recipients.



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The land is acknowledged as our Mother, the Earth. The University of Saskatchewan is committed to honour and support the Indigenous peoples, Indigenous cultures, Indigenous values, and Indigenous languages that belong to the land of Treaty 6 Territory and Homeland of the Métis. The University of Saskatchewan is committed to working towards mending colonized lands and protecting the land in a way that demonstrates honour, respect and love. The University of Saskatchewan extends this commitment to the lands and Treaty territories (Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10) that constitute kisiskâciwan ([Saskatchewan], “the swift current”, Cree/Saulteaux), and all Indigenous people that call kisiskâciwan home. We are born to the land and the land claims us.

PROGRAM

WELCOME AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko and Aurora Wolfe, Emcees

PRAYER AND GREETING

Elder Roland Duquette and Elder Linda Sanderson

MÉTIS NATIONAL ANTHEM

Brandi Tourand

MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Angela Jamie, Vice Provost, Indigenous Engagement

Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio, Acting Provost and VP Academic

Dallas Pelly, Director of Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre

AWARDS CEREMONY

Jennifer Amarualik-Yaremko and Aurora Wolfe

CLOSING REMARKS

HONOUR SONG

TJ Warren

HONOUREES GROUP PHOTO

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

For students who have excelled in their academic studies at USask.

Jolynn Amyotte *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIORESOURCES

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, RENEWABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Deer Ridge, SK

Jolynn grew up on a mixed grain farm near Shellbrook Saskatchewan. Her time spent on the farm as well as growing up near Prince Albert National Park instilled within her a passion for the environment and working towards a better future. In the fall of 2021, Jolynn enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan. This spring Jolynn is scheduled to finish her undergraduate degree with a major in resource science and a minor in toxicology, and she is looking forward to her position with the Ministry of Environment this summer.

Deltine Brown *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

INDIAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (ITEP)

Peter Ballantyne First Nation

Deltine Brown is from Sandy Bay, SK of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Cree of the 'TH' dialect. She lives in Saskatoon and is married with four children and five grandchildren. She is in her fourth year of the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP). She has enjoyed the positive, welcoming experiences in ITEP as she completes an education degree. Once she graduates, she's hoping to be an early years (kindergarten) teacher working in a Cree immersion elementary school.

Laura Clark-Favel *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

BACHELOR OF ARTS, INDIGENOUS STUDIES

Poundmaker First Nation and Waterhen First Nation

Laura Clark-Favel is a proud member of Poundmaker Cree Nation and has additional ties to Waterhen Lake Cree Nation. Laura grew up in Northern Saskatchewan and is in her third year of university, majoring in Indigenous studies while pursuing a path in medicine. Laura is passionate about equitable healthcare and culturally safe practices to promote Indigenous health and well-being. She is currently in the admissions process for UBC's MD undergraduate program.

Taylor Fergel *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND NUTRITION

DOCTOR OF PHARMACY

Métis Nation of Alberta

Taylor Fergel wanted to be in a profession that helped people, requiring lifelong learning, and focused on healthcare. Taylor joined the college's Indigenous initiatives committee in her first year of the PharmD program. Taylor proposed the utilization of a co-curricular record to increase event attendance and participation within the college. She believes that it is the duty of pharmacy students to learn so they can influence change within the profession, and specifically Indigenous health.

Easton Hudson *(He/Him)*

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Métis Nation

Easton Hudson is a proud member of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, born and raised in Saskatoon. He is in his second year of a four-year mechanical engineering degree. Passionate about math and science from a young age, he chose to pursue engineering and has excelled academically. Fascinated by robotics, vehicles, and nuclear power, he is drawn to mechatronics. Raised by his family who taught him Métis traditions, he continues to deepen his cultural understanding by learning about his family's history. He enjoys sports, volunteering, and kart racing at Martensville Speedway.

Ronan Inkster *(They/Them)*

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

INDIGENOUS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PATHWAYS, MUSIC

Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Gabriel Dumont local 11

Ronan Inkster is a second-year music education student from Saskatoon, and a proud two-spirit citizen of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. They grew up playing the fiddle (as well as other instruments) and started reclaiming their Michif heritage in high school. Today, Ronan is enthusiastic in bringing what they know about Michif music and history into the setting of music education.

Eli Lafleur *(He/Him)*

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE, SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Métis Nation

Eli Lafleur is pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce in Supply Chain Management. His interest in commerce stems from its essential versatility. Whether it be in banking, the arts, non-profits or community, he believes commerce can be a vital tool toward Indigenous economic development and reconciliation.

He has been an active member of the Indigenous Business Students' Society, an inclusive student group at the University of Saskatchewan dedicated to fostering a strong community for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. He gained first-hand experience in Indigenous economic development through his role as a summer student at Indigenous Services Canada. This opportunity allowed him to apply his education meaningfully and deepen his understanding of the policies and initiatives that support Indigenous businesses and communities.

Beyond academics and work, he enjoys staying active with activities like rock climbing and running. He practices yoga to clear his mind and connects with family and nature to keep himself grounded. He also appreciates the simple joys of catching up with friends over a good cup of coffee.

Kimberly Lebel *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIORESOURCES

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, ANIMAL BIOSCIENCE

Métis Nation, Williams Lake, B.C

Kim Lebel is a 2Spirit Métis woman with ancestral roots in the historic Red River settlements. While she has overcome barriers to education, she is deeply grateful for the opportunity to learn. A dedicated student, researcher, and advocate, Kim is committed to pursuing academics that align with her passion for environmental sustainability and community-driven initiatives, using her voice to create meaningful change.

Peter Olver *(He/Him)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SASKATCHEWAN URBAN NATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (SUNTEP)

Métis Nation

Peter Olver is a proud Métis gentleman from Saskatoon. He is an outstanding student with averages over the course of his four-year degree in great distinction. Peter is a very gracious and humble gentleman, a candidate teacher, husband and father of three children. Peter recognizes and values whole-heartedly what it means to mentor, support and guide young people to help them become the best they can possibly be.

Saffron Powell *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SASKATCHEWAN URBAN NATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (SUNTEP)

PRINCE ALBERT CAMPUS

Lac LaRonge Indian Band

Saffron Powell is currently finishing her third year in the SUNTEP Prince Albert program. She is a bright, articulate, self-motivated student teacher. Academically, Saffron is committed to excellence. She arrives early for class and stays late working diligently on her assignments. She takes time to seek out conferences with instructors using feedback for her own personal growth as a student. She has been the recipient of numerous scholarships based on her academic performance and leadership.

Mekenna Sheppard *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, DENTAL THERAPY

PRINCE ALBERT CAMPUS

Métis Nation

Makenna Sheppard is in her final year of her Bachelor of Science in Dental Therapy degree at the University of Saskatchewan's Prince Albert campus. As a proud Métis student, she values being part of an Indigenous-focused program, and is eager to make a meaningful impact in her community through her career in oral healthcare.

Rachel Tillie *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, DENTAL THERAPY

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

Rachel Tillie is a proud Métis student from Regina, Saskatchewan. At the moment, she lives at home with her parents, along with her four cats and two dogs while studying in her first year of school to become a dental therapist. She has always had a love for going to the dentist, but her interest truly blossomed after her first appointment at the orthodontist at the age of twelve. She hopes to inspire a young girl to love dentistry, similar to how her orthodontist inspired her.

Kelly Tolley-Procyk *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF NURSING

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, NURSING

PRINCE ALBERT CAMPUS

Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

A fourth-year nursing student from Prince Albert, Kelly is a member of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Western Region 2 with familial roots in St. Louis and Batoche, Saskatchewan. After convocating this spring, she plans to work in neo-natal intensive care. She wishes to thank the College of Nursing and the University of Saskatchewan for this honour.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For students who have made significant contributions to an Indigenous or non-Indigenous community.

Kellsey Brazeau (*She/Her*)

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, NURSING

Cote First Nation

Kellsey Brazeau is from Cote First Nation and is a fourth-year nursing student. She is committed to community care through practicums and summer employment in her home communities' health centers. She has been a mentor in the Building Intercultural Resilience Mentorship Program (BIRM) for four years and also participated in the UPLIFT and Rivers to Success programs. She has shown dedication to serving her communities through her strengths as a proud Indigenous student and will continue to do so as she moves into her professional career in health services.

Jolon Lafond (*He/Him*)

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation

Jolon Lafond is a citizen of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation located in Treaty Six Territory and a father of three children. He is a fourth-year student in the School for the Arts, focusing on visual, digital, and community-engaged art. Jolon brings deep empathy and creative vision to his role as Executive Director for Saskatoon's White Buffalo Youth Lodge and sits as Chair for the Community Advisory Board on Saskatoon Homelessness and the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Land Advisory Authority.

Jason Mercredi (*He/Him*)

JOHNSON SHOYAMA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

ONLINE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Chipewyan Prairie First Nation

Jason Mercredi is a member of Chipewyan Prairie First Nation and grew up in La Ronge, SK. He's of Denesuline, Métis and Scottish ancestry. His family and mixed heritage taught him the importance of community and culture. He enjoys governance and volunteers on Oskayak High School's kitōtēminawak Council. He's employed with Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, helping establish jurisdiction for Child and Family Services. He spends his free time outdoors with his partner Michelle and their pets.

Edward Mirasty (*He/Him*)

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PHD, INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Lac La Ronge Indian Band

Edward Mirasty, a Cree member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, has over 32 years of education. A 1994 ITEP graduate, he earned his master's in 2006 and is pursuing a PhD, with his dissertation on the experiences of Indigenous senior faculty during and after the TRC's Calls to Action slated for defence in April. He served as Director of Education at the PA Grand Council for 17 years, has co-authored 11 books, and received the 2011 Sask. Aboriginal Literacy Award.

Sheila Naytowhow *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, BUILT ENVIRONMENT GROUP

MASTER OF SCIENCE, HEALTH SCIENCES

Montreal Lake Cree Nation

Sheila is a graduate student in the College of Medicine's Health Sciences program. She previously completed the Graduate Certificate in Leadership from USask's Edwards School of Business. While pursuing her graduate studies, she also works as a research assistant on various community-engaged research projects funded by agencies such as SHRF and CIHR, with a focus on housing and health for those living on-reserve in Saskatchewan. In her research, Sheila has introduced and led her team in applying strengths-based approaches to support First Nations leaders and housing managers in their roles. Her MSc research explores how the subjective experiences of being a First Nations leader impact health and wellness. Sheila is also a member of the NIEHR network at USask. She presented her research in British Columbia this past fall and will present in Oklahoma, USA this coming summer.

Sanford Strongarm *(He/Him)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

INDIAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (ITEP)

Kawacatoose First Nation

Sanford Strongarm Jr. is from the Kawacatoose First Nation and has lived in Saskatoon his entire life. He has a wife and three beautiful children. He worked at the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre for 15 years before entering the ITEP Program in Fall 2024. His dad always taught him to share their culture and to be involved in every opportunity he could. He enjoys sharing his culture and meeting new people. Sanford tries to help everyone as much as he can. The one thing he would like to leave with everyone is ahkamēyimok (don't give up, keep trying, persevere all of you).

LEADERSHIP

For students who have demonstrated exemplary leadership on or off-campus.

Amy Constant *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF LAW

James Smith Cree Nation

Amy is a member of the James Smith Cree Nation. Amy is actively involved in the College of Law. She is president of the Indigenous Law Students' Association, sits on the Indigenous engagement committee, and volunteers with Pro Bono Students Canada. Amy encourages social connections and respect among her peers and strives to further reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Jason Cook-Studer *(He/Him)*

SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (SENS)

MASTER OF SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY SECURITY

Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB)

Jason Cook-Studer, a SENS student in energy security and member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, leads community energy planning and sustainability efforts. As LLRIB Pithesowiskotew Community energy manager, he manages the Community Energy Planning Project, focusing on renewable energy, local training, and reducing fossil fuel reliance. His initiatives aim to lower power bills, cut emissions, and enhance sustainability, setting a model of community-driven initiatives for other communities.

Johnny Cross *(He/him)*

GORDON OAKES RED BEAR STUDENT CENTRE

INDIAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (ITEP)

Poundmaker First Nation

Treaty 6 Indian. Powwow dancer/singer. Student. Actor. Role Model. Friend. These are things that make up Johnny Tootoosis (Cross). Johnny was raised traditionally in Plains Cree territory since early age by his late grandparents on the Poundmaker Cree Nation. He is currently in his second year of the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) after switching from Arts and Science. A quote he wants to share with all of his fellow Indigenous students is, "When one of us wins, we all win."

Brennan Dupre *(He/Him)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

INDIAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (ITEP)

Lac LaRonge Indian Band

Brennan Dupre is a proud Lac La Ronge Indian Band member in his third year of education in the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP). At the university, Brennan demonstrates leadership in various ways, including as a member of the ITEP Student Executive Council, a peer mentor for College of Education learning communities, a Building Intercultural Resilience through Mentorship (BIRM) mentor, a member of USask Indigenous Student Leaders, and a volunteer for the wāhkotōwin programs hosted by ITEP.

Isaac Hedstrom (He/Him)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SASKATCHEWAN URBAN NATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (SUNTEP)

Métis Nation

Isaac Hedstrom is a proud Métis gentleman from Saskatoon. He is a graduate of Aden Bowman Collegiate and their International Baccalaureate School; he continued to excel in the SUNTEP program and the College of Education. He has been a great part of the student representative council and leads with great humility, respect and selflessness. Isaac is known for his determination, collegiality and supporting others.

Robyn Klassen (She/Her)

COLLEGE OF NURSING

MASTER OF NURSING

Lac La Ronge Indian Band

Robyn Klassen, a proud member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, has lived in La Ronge, SK her entire life. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Regina in 2014. Robyn has worked as a public health nurse and supervisor at Lac La Ronge Indian Band Health Services. She is a certified First Nations health manager and a Master of Nursing student at the University of Saskatchewan. Robyn has two children and is active in local figure skating and dance clubs.

Shawn Laliberte (He/Him)

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION, EARLY/MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAM (COMMUNITY BASED COHORT IN BEAUVAL, SK)

Meadow Lake Flying Dust First Nation

Shawn Laliberte lives in Beauval, SK with his wife and children. He's in his first year of the Northwest Teacher Education Program (NWSTEP). For 14 years, he worked as an educational assistant at Valley View Community School, where he discovered his passion for education. Mathematics is one of his strengths. He enjoys problem solving; it feels like a game. The satisfaction of understanding a challenging concept, whether for himself or his students, fuels his passion for both math and technology.

Eric McAllister (He/Him)

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

INDIGENOUS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PATHWAYS

BACHELOR OF ARTS, POLITICAL STUDIES

Métis Nation Saskatchewan

Eric McAllister is a proud citizen of Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. Originally from Yorkton, he is completing a Bachelor of Arts in Political Studies. Eric plans to pursue law school in the upcoming year with a goal of working in Aboriginal law or as a public defender. He spends a lot of time outside of school volunteering and is co-founder and president of the Métis Students of USask, which fosters and promotes Métis community on campus, and is former vice-president of Métis Local 126.

Thomas McBride *(He/Him)*

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, PUBLIC HEALTH

Otipemisiwak Métis Government of Alberta

A proud member of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of Alberta, Thomas mentors youth in health, wellness and resilience; fostering the next generation of Indigenous leaders. Co-founder of Koolau Health and Wellness Centre in Hawaii and adjunct faculty member at BYU–Hawaii, he is currently pursuing a PhD in public health. His research focuses on the traits of allies who foster resilience in others.

Caitlin McNeill *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF NURSING

MASTER OF NURSING, PRIMARY HEALTH CARE NURSE PRACTITIONER

Mosakahiken Cree Nation

Caitlin McNeill, a nurse practitioner student and member of the Mosakahiken Cree Nation, completed her Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Manitoba and a Master of Public Health at the University of Victoria. She has extensive experience in northern healthcare, including emergency nursing, obstetrics, and opioid agonist therapy (OAT). As director of health services for the Opaskwayak Health Authority, she advocates for reconciliation, equity, and integrating Cree perspectives into health services.

Lexus Neil *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

INDIGENOUS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PATHWAYS

BACHELOR OF ARTS, PSYCHOLOGY

Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Local 9

Lexus Neil is a member of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, Local 9. Lexus grew up in Prince Albert and has lived in Saskatoon for the last eight years. She has taken a leadership role in the College of Arts and Science as an ISAP peer mentor and champion of interdisciplinary dialogue through the arts. Lexus is majoring in psychology and hopes to obtain a Certificate in Indigenous Governance and Politics this winter semester.

Roddy Ross *(He/him)*

HUSKIES

Canoe Lake First Nation

Roddy Ross has emerged as a remarkable leader within his community and among his peers. Over the past few years, he has grown into his role of leadership and inspiration. As a talented goalie for the Huskies, Roddy has become a beacon of hope and pride, especially for Indigenous youth. His goalie helmet, adorned with Indigenous symbolism, serves as a powerful reminder of his heritage and the strength it embodies. It illustrates to Indigenous youth that USask is a safe and welcoming space and exemplifies his resiliency as an Indigenous athlete. Roddy's influence extends beyond the rink. He actively engages with his peers and community, participating in various initiatives and mentoring young athletes. His approachable nature and dedication have made him a beloved figure, particularly among youth who look up to him as a role model. His journey is a testament to the impact one individual can have on their community and beyond.

Tianna Sangwais *(She/Her)*

OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

BACHELOR OF ARTS, SOCIOLOGY - INDIGENOUS JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY

Ochapowace Nation and Zagime Anishnabek

During her time at USask, Tianna has been a leader for community change. She serves as a Building Intercultural Resilience Mentorship Program (BIRM) mentor, developing post-secondary pathways for Indigenous high school students, and as a career peer educator. She was also a mentor with the inaugural Indigenous Summer Institute under the Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement. Additionally, she leads the student advocacy and support portfolio for the Indigenous Students' Union, instructs Powwow classes at the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, serves as the traditions liaison for the Indigenous Business Students' Society, and advises several campus initiatives as a student representative. Tianna is proud of her culture and identity and strives to create spaces and opportunities for all students to build a strong community on and off campus. She brings her passion for advocacy and representation into both her studies and extracurricular activities.

Roxanne Stewart

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION, EARLY/MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAM (CTEP - COMMUNITY BASED COHORT IN PELICAN NARROWS, SK)

Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Sandy Bay

Roxanne Stewart, from Sandy Bay, SK, is a member of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. She is currently in her second year of the Cree Teacher Education Program (CTEP) in Pelican Narrows. She is a wife and a mother to eight children. For her, it has been a busy year trying to balance her family and university. When she heard that the CTEP was offered in Pelican Narrows, she thought she had better take the opportunity to apply for the program. She has worked in her community school in Sandy Bay for decades as a substitute teacher and educational assistant.

Terri Thunder *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

Thunderchild First Nation

Terri is a registered member of Thunderchild First Nation and in her second year of medicine. She has taken on many leadership roles within the medical Indigenous and non-Indigenous student groups and within the college. In 2024, she completed a dean's summer project with Dr. Ben Leis and Dr. Cara Spence, focusing on using 'story' to enhance wrap-around support for patients with infective endocarditis. Terri is taking action to change the narrative and is trying to find potential solutions to improve Indigenous healthcare experiences for current and future patients. Terri says, "I believe that effective leadership in this field requires amplifying Indigenous voices, promoting culturally safe care, and ensuring that medical education incorporates Indigenous perspectives." And, she is committed to enhancing health outcomes and strengthening the relationships between Indigenous patients and the healthcare system.

Abby Tiessen *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SASKATCHEWAN URBAN NATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (SUNTEP)

PRINCE ALBERT CAMPUS

Métis Nation

Abby Tiessen is a proud Métis woman pursuing her Bachelor of Education degree at SUNTEP in Prince Albert. Abby has immersed herself in the SUNTEP community, taking on a leadership role as the professional development representative with the SRC. She has also contributed significantly by volunteering to lead and organize multiple school events. Beyond her academic achievements, Abby is a dedicated student-athlete serving as captain of her USask rugby team.

Barbie Venne *(She/Her)*

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE, SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation

Barbie Venne is a dedicated and hardworking student pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Supply Chain Management. Her educational journey began at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), where she earned a Business Administration diploma. Realizing she could transfer her credits to university, she made the decision to further her education to create better career opportunities. Before returning to school, she spent over a decade working in the spa industry before transitioning into retail management. Her experience led her to discover her passion for operations and supply chain management. Throughout her academic career, she has remained actively involved in her community, working for her home First Nation and volunteering with the Indigenous Business Student Society. She is committed to giving back, mentoring students, and fostering strong community connections. Upon graduation in 2025, she hopes to use her education to create meaningful change within her community and beyond.

RESEARCH

For students who undertook unique or compelling undergraduate or graduate research.

Erin Baril *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

BACHELOR OF ARTS, BIOLOGY/BIOCHEMISTRY

Muskoday First Nation

Erin is a Saskatoon-based member of Muskoday First Nation, completing a double honours biology/biochemistry program. She has held two NSERC USRA awards, with the Wood-Simko Honeybee Health lab and the McLoughlin Population Ecology lab. She has supported her USask community in volunteer capacities with VASU, Beading with Aunty and the library PAL program.

Ailah Carpenter *(All | They/Them)*

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

Stanley Mission - Lac La Ronge Indian Band

Ailah Carpenter is a mixed-Indigenous, two-spirit artist specializing in visual and digital arts. A member of Stanley Mission (Lac La Ronge Indian Band), Ailah uplifts Indigenous perspectives in their BFA program while creating opportunities for their peers through initiatives like the Mix Print Collective. Ailah harnesses the qualities of their preferred creative media to emphasize the interplay of light and dark, exploring self and what it means to live between societal norms.

Kendra DuRussel *(She/Her)*

WESTERN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

DOCTOR OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Métis Nation Ontario

Kendra is a citizen of the Métis Nation of Ontario. She is a wife and mother. Kendra was a paramedic before coming to USask and now the WCVm to pursue her dream of becoming a veterinarian/clinician/scientist. She led all aspects of an independent research project in Dr. Olver's lab and presented her work at local and national conferences. She aims to publish this work as lead author in 2025.

Destiny Fiddler

COLLEGE OF KINESIOLOGY

Waterhen Lake First Nation

Destiny Fiddler is a nehiyaw iskwe (Plains Cree Woman) from Waterhen Lake First Nation. She is currently completing degrees in both kinesiology and education with a minor in Indigenous studies. She will be the first member of her family to graduate from university. Destiny has given back to community by working with the Indigenous population at White Buffalo Youth Lodge and has a passion for Indigenous wellness through physical activity and seeking ways for all Indigenous peoples to have access to physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional wellness. This passion for activity and her interest in Indigenous health issues has fueled Destiny's work in the College of Kinesiology as a student researcher in an important national project examining Indigenous women and girls' participation in sports and physical activity. Destiny plans to continue this work as a master's student this fall.

RESILIENCY

For an upper-year student, who is on track to graduate, who has overcome significant personal challenges to succeed in their studies.

Cam Bird

SCHOOL OF REHABILITATION SCIENCE

MASTER OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation

Cameron Bird, second year Master of Physical Therapy student from Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, grew up in Prince Albert. His college is proud of his commitment to culture and the leadership he provides to other students, taking part and learning at Circles of Reconciliation. He will continue to practice his Nehiyaw way of life to the best of his ability. He has been described as 'courageous,' 'soft and sensitive' and 'in tune with the emotional status' of his patients, demonstrating his capacity for compassion and empathy.

Denise Bird *(She/Her)*

ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE

BACHELOR OF ARTS, PSYCHOLOGY

Mosquito Grizzly Bear's Head Lean Man First Nation

Denise is a proud member of Mosquito Grizzly Bear's Head Lean Man First Nation. She has experienced many challenges as a student but has persevered with humility, confidence and grace while completing her four-year BA in psychology with a certificate in Indigenous storytelling. She credits her success to her traditional ways of knowing along with the support from family and friends as well as the community she has found at the USask and St. Thomas More College, all of which guides her P/T work with vulnerable people.

Janae Burnouf *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF NURSING

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, NURSING

Métis Nation, Beauval, SK

Janae Burnouf, a proud Métis woman, is in her final year of the USask Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. She calls Beauval, SK home and plans to work at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon before applying to the USask Nurse Practitioner program. Janae aspires to become a community health nurse in northern communities. In her spare time, she enjoys working out, walking, cooking and spending time with friends.

Fallon Fulton *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

BACHELOR OF ARTS, POLITICAL STUDIES

Métis Nation

Fallon Fulton is a third-year Métis political studies student, focusing her program on Indigenous rights and social justice. Driven by a desire to advocate for marginalized communities, Fallon aspires to use her education to influence policy, advance equity, build better international relations, and create meaningful social change.

Nevada Gunn *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SASKATCHEWAN URBAN NATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (SUNTEP)

English River First Nation

Nevada Gunn is a proud Dene and Cree woman from English River First Nation. She is a devoted mother of four children who has persevered through great adversity during the past six years to attain her Bachelor of Education. Nevada's determination to learn and do well for her family shone through; she was never one to miss a class, even when she experienced tumultuous times with child-care and finding a good home for her family.

Raenna Hesje *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING, ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Métis Nation

Raenna Hesje is a proud citizen of Métis Nation Saskatchewan, currently enrolled in environmental engineering at the University of Saskatchewan. She graduated high school in 2014 and spent seven years in the service industry. In 2021, she began her educational journey, balancing motherhood with her studies. Raenna is on track to graduate with distinction in 2026.

Bianca Martell-Allary *(She/her)*

GORDON OAKES RED BEAR STUDENT CENTRE

ARTS AND SCIENCE

Waterhen Lake First Nation

Bianca Martell-Allary is a second-year Arts and Science student from Waterhen Lake Cree Nation. She is passionate about her culture and enjoys jingle dress dancing. When she's not in class, she likes staying active at the gym and spending time at the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, connecting with fellow students. Bianca is also active in the Indigenous Students' Union, advocating for Indigenous voices on campus.

Avery Natewayes *(She/Her)*

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

SASKATCHEWAN URBAN NATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (SUNTEP)

PRINCE ALBERT CAMPUS

Sandy Bay First Nation

Avery, a resilient SUNTEP student from Sandy Bay, overcame the challenges of transitioning to city life to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher. Facing loneliness, cultural differences, and academic struggles, she remained determined, drawing strength from her roots and leaning on new friendships. Each setback fueled her perseverance, and every success reaffirmed her purpose. Now close to finishing her degree, she serves as a role model, proving that resilience can turn dreams into reality.

Rebecca Tootoosis *(She/Her)*

EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE, MANAGEMENT

Saddle Lake Cree Nation

Rebecca Tootoosis is a proud nêhiyawiskwêw (Plains Cree woman) from Saddle Lake Cree Nation with over a decade of experience in client relations, leadership, and business administration. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Management from the University of Saskatchewan's Edwards School of Business and a Business Management diploma from Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Her studies took her to Geneva, Switzerland, where she engaged with global organizations like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, deepening her understanding of international governance and economic development. Professionally, Rebecca has excelled in customer relations, sales, and administrative coordination, demonstrating strong leadership and problem-solving skills. Rooted in her Plains Cree culture, she actively participates in traditional ceremonies and community initiatives. Passionate about leadership and cultural advocacy, Rebecca strives to bridge business excellence with Indigenous empowerment and social responsibility.