

# INDIGENOUS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



**FEBRUARY 6, 2020**



# Indigenous Achievement Week

## Student Awards Ceremony

The Indigenous Student Achievement Awards recognize Indigenous students who have excelled in their studies, undertaken unique or compelling research, made significant contributions to the community or who have demonstrated leadership.

**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENTS!**

# Program

Master of Ceremonies

**Candace Wasacase-Lafferty**

Student Orators

**Autumn LaRose-Smith**

**Sage Speidel. Whitecloud**

Welcoming Prayer

**Louise Halfe**

Presentation of Awards

Honour Song

**Rollin Baldhead**

Métis National Anthem

**Tawnie Kotyk**

Reception

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*The University of Saskatchewan's main campus is situated on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.*

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# Indigenous Student Achievement Award Recipients

## COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIORESOURCES

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### **Hope Skorlatowski**

#### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Métis Nation of Alberta*

Hope is in her second year of the Bachelor of Science in Animal Bioscience degree program. She grew up on an acreage outside of Cold Lake, Alberta and is a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta. When she is not in school, she enjoys riding her horse or playing with her dogs and cats. Her passion for animals motivated her to pursue post-secondary education and choose the University of Saskatchewan with one of her long-term goals being to study veterinary medicine.

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

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### **Paydahbin Aby-Hester**

#### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*T'it'q'et First Nation, BC*

In her "Introduction to Biology" course, Paydahbin demonstrated intelligence, hard work and commitment. She actively took on a leadership role through leading jigsaw activities and encouraging her classmates to seize the opportunity to lead themselves. She contributed to all case studies, playing an active role in group activities and class discussion.

### **Jerilyn Alderman-Hansson**

#### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Saskatoon, SK*

In her "Women Writers and Activism" seminar, Jerilyn exemplified extraordinary relational leadership. She added a new dimension to class discussion and has provided a community of transformative learning through voicing her opinions and asking critical and incisive questions. She models anger and frustration, as well as humour and collaboration.

## **Christy Anderson**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Pinaymootang First Nation*

Christy is a first-year PhD student in Indigenous studies. She is a member of the Pinaymootang First Nation in Treaty 2 Territory. She achieved first-class standing in her master's degree and has been excelling in her PhD coursework since beginning at the University of Saskatchewan. Her PhD research will make significant contributions and advance knowledge in various fields, such as Indigenous studies, women's and gender studies, criminology and socio-legal studies. Further contributions will include resources directed at policy change and community-based empowerment.

## **Travis Black**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Saskatoon, SK*

Travis is a fourth-year student in the interdisciplinary honour's program of mathematical physics. He maintains a superior average of 91 per cent in his major. In addition to his excellent performance in a challenging combination of mathematics and physics courses, Travis volunteers weekly at Gabriel Dumont Institute as a mathematics and physics tutor. He is respected amongst his peers and participates enthusiastically in activities of the Mathematics Student Society, MS<sup>3</sup>.

## **Sarah Blom**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Métis*

Sarah is a fifth-year history honours student, minoring in math, with plans to pursue an education degree. She has been actively involved in the Newman Sounds Glee Club and the Newman Centre Executive since her first year. As a glee club member, she sings second soprano, and as a member of the Newman Centre, she helps plan different events such as the centre's annual retreat. Her leadership has noticeably enriched the life of the St. Thomas More College community.

## **Kate Boyer**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Métis*

Kate is culturally and academically talented; she is known for her commitment and ambition towards her Métis citizenship. She is artistically talented, an athlete and she is extremely gregarious. Kate is dedicated to life-long learning and strives for excellence in all that she does.

## **Bailee Brewster**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Métis*

Bailee is a third-year student in the College of Arts and Science. She plans to pursue law at the University of Saskatchewan next fall, after completing her three-year psychology degree. She is a Métis woman who plans to study Aboriginal law and family law and to further educate herself on the beliefs and practices of her culture. Bailee excels academically, having obtained the highest average among St. Thomas More College's Indigenous student body.

## **Lorin Gardypie**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Saskatoon, SK*

Lorin has a drive to acquire knowledge and compare it to his Indigenous world view. He is a quiet leader with a humble presence that leads others to listen respectfully and attentively. Lorin is a natural storyteller who predicates his questions by relating stories based on his oral cultural skills and is infused with Indigenous knowledge.

## **Gaelene Lerat**

### **RESEARCH AWARD**

*Saskatoon, SK*

Gaelene is the first female Indigenous graduate student in the Department of Physics and Engineering Physics. Her Master of Science work covers how huge currents flowing into and out of the atmosphere are related to the brilliant displays of aurora that we can see—a phenomenon known as a "geomagnetic substorm." She loves to travel and is a wonderful ambassador for the university, for Canada and especially for the First Peoples of Canada.

## **Jillian McLeod**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Saskatoon, SK*

Jillian is a fourth-year music education student who has consistently excelled academically. Due to her high academic standing, Jillian has received numerous Department of Music awards, including the prestigious Kaplan Scholarship. She demonstrates leadership as an elected member of the USask Music Educator's Society (USMES), as a section leader in the Wind Orchestra and as the Student Executive President with the Saskatoon Youth Orchestra.

## **Brisa Paskimin**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Tlacopan and Itzalcalco Clans in Mexico City*

Brisa is a third-year student majoring in Indigenous studies. She is Nawa from the Tlacopan and Itzalcalco (Place of the Salt) clans in Mexico City. Brisa has been dancing her peoples' traditional Aztec dances all her life and is from the Salinas family. She and her daughter created Mexika Designs, which highlights their original and very popular earring designs. Through her artwork, she strives to step outside the prevailing stereotypes and celebrate Indigeneity in everyday life.

## **Alexandria Smith**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Nelson House, MB*

Alexandria has demonstrated a capacity for academic excellence at the highest level, averaging 92 per cent in her anthropology courses this semester after resuming her studies under extremely difficult personal circumstances acting as caregiver and principal supporter for others. Alexandria is Nisichawayasihk Cree and is determined to reclaim her Indigenous heritage and language lost through her family's experience with residential schools. Alexandria has been actively involved in Indigenous student activities, participating in numerous workshops and conferences.

## **Jeremy Smith**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Métis*

Jeremy is a proud Métis man and is involved in many cultural events on campus and in the community. He takes on leadership opportunities and works hard in his studies. Jeremy is a proud father and works at culturally engaging his learning with his family. He is pursuing a degree in computer science.

## **Chloe Stainbrook**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Martensville, SK*

Chloe has excelled academically and has demonstrated leadership within the Philosophy Students' Society. She has found her groove and is now consistently producing solid "A" work and excellent research papers. Beyond her academic achievements, Chloe has demonstrated initiative, stamina and personal leadership in a variety of ways. She has a passion for her work, especially as it concerns the environment, and is an extremely hardworking student.

## **Shicona Thomas**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Prince Albert, SK*

Shicona is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree as a first step toward her goal of studying medicine. In her first term, Shicona excelled in her "Literature and Composition Reading Narrative" class by exhibiting a deep understanding of the subject matter and engaging with the course material on a sophisticated level. In her "Studying in Science Essential Skills and Strategies" class, she aligned her first-year undergraduate research project with her future goals, investigating potential therapeutic roles for human parasites in the treatment and prevention of immune-related health challenges.

## **Aurora Wolfe**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Saskatoon, SK*

During the "Digital and Integrated Practice" class, Aurora engaged with every project at a high level of understanding and found unique ways to bring her Indigenous background into her work. Aurora had two stand-out assignments, one in which she utilized traditional beading to create a performance between her and nature, and another where she situated herself within the context of a Renaissance painting, all while teaching the class about her traditional language.

## COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

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## **Ashlyn Schwab**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Métis Nation Saskatchewan*

Ashlyn is currently pursuing a dual Doctor of Dental Medicine and a Bachelor of Science in Dentistry after completing a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology at the University of Saskatchewan. She was raised in North Battleford, SK and graduated from John Paul II Collegiate High School. Ashlyn enjoys spending time outdoors and loves to try new activities.



# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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## **Katie Farmer**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Métis Nation Saskatchewan*

Katie is a member of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. She is a fifth-year cross country and track and field Huskie athlete finishing a combined degree in kinesiology and education. She has volunteered as a coach at many levels of basketball in Saskatoon, where she has grown up, and is currently coaching at Aden Bowman Collegiate.

## **Candace Longjohn-Constant**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Sturgeon Lake*

Candace is an Indigenous educator living in Prince Albert with her family of eight. She is recognized with two degrees: a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts Four-Year in Anthropology. She has taught Indigenous studies and nehiyaw language arts for 17 years at École St. Mary High School in Prince Albert. She is enjoying the classes and the culturally enriching experiences offered by the Certificate in Indigenous Languages program under the tutelage of Kevin Lewis (PhD). She especially enjoys the journey in learning to become a more fluent speaker of Plains Cree, practising with her parents and sharing those teachings with her family and students.

# Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP)

## **Candace Gadwa**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Frog Lake First Nation*

Candace is a long-standing ITEP mentor for Indigenous Ensemble, a program that works with youth in the community. She also takes part in community events and helped with Think Indigenous. Candace is always willing to help other teachers to bring Indigenous language and culture into the classroom, wherever she has been placed for field experience. She has been hired for an immediate contract to work with the development of the Indigenous Ensemble credit development.

## **Preston Gamble**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation*

Preston is a student leader in the North Battleford ITEP cohort. He has assisted his peers and the ITEP community while promoting his language and culture in his program and the wider community.

## **Amanda Jobb**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Peter Ballentyne Cree Nation*

During her internship, Amanda became very involved with the school community and was pursued by both school divisions for an immediate contract because of her ability to develop relationships and her passion for language revitalization. While in her internship, Amanda promoted her language by starting Kokum's Corner, featuring a grandmother character who spoke the Cree language in a way that children can learn the language.

## **Kylee Peekeekoot**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation*

Pursuing her Bachelor of Education, Kylee has done exceptionally well in all of her classes, both academically and professionally. She had 100 per cent attendance throughout her courses and her overall average is 80 per cent.

## Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP)

## **Meirah Bender**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Muskeg Lake Cree Nation*

Meirah is in her third year of the SUNTEP Prince Albert program. She is a dedicated student who understands the hard work and determination it takes to go beyond the passing average. She displays a tremendous commitment to her community through various volunteer hours working with KidSport and SUNTEP. She is both determined and knowledgeable when it comes to teaching students the sacredness and history of Indigenous culture.

## **Nathan Gaudet**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Métis*

Nathan Gaudet is a very proud French-speaking Métis man who excels at all he is involved in. He is an exemplary student who consistently demonstrates humility, integrity and dignity. He leads by example and absolutely shines in the classroom.

## **Shaina Hounsell**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Métis*

Shaina Hounsell is a very proud Métis woman. She is dedicated and respectfully demonstrates consistent positive mannerisms in teacher education and in her greater community. Shaina works hard at promoting her Métis culture and has already made significant impact with those she works with.

## **Angela Silva**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Métis*

Angela is in her third year of SUNTEP and is very proud of her Métis citizenship. She represents positive leadership at all times and signs up to help on committees. Angela recently produced an amazing video presentation on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls for an Arts course; her work exemplified heart, conviction and commitment towards reconciliation.

# EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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## **Morgan Kalk**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Lac La Ronge First Nation*

Morgan recently completed her Bachelor of Commerce in Management with honours at the Edwards School of Business. During her studies, she proudly stayed active in the community, committing her time to the Indigenous Business Students' Society, Marketing Students' Society, USSU Indigenous Students' Affairs Committee, SIIT Students' Association, Smart Cities with the Mayor's Office and various community support events. She now works as an associate with DCG Philanthropic Services Inc.

## **Brittni Robert**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*North Battleford*

Brittni is in her fourth year of studies at Edwards School of Business, majoring in accounting. She transferred to USask in 2018 from North West College in North Battleford, where she completed a diploma in Business Accountancy from Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Brittni is an active member of her community, involved in various fundraising events and organizing activities within her church community.

## **Erin Sader**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Métis Nation Saskatchewan*

Erin was born and raised in Saskatoon and is a member of the Métis Nation Saskatchewan. Erin will be completing her Bachelor of Commerce degree with a major in accounting in spring 2020. After graduation she will be joining Deloitte in Saskatoon to pursue her CPA designation.

## COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

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## **Harrison Bull**

### **RESEARCH AWARD**

*George Gordon First Nation*

Harrison was born and raised in Saskatoon and is a member of the George Gordon First Nation. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Engineering with a focus on chemical engineering and is currently pursuing a master's degree in civil engineering. His research area is in water treatment and environmental remediation. In his free time Harrison enjoys music and nature.

## COLLEGE OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

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## **John Bird**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Peguis First Nation*

In 2017, John earned his Master of Arts in history. The resulting project focused on Anishinaabe celebrity author George Copway's engagement with newcomer culture and it went on to win a Graduate Thesis Award. He is now completing a PhD in history, with his dissertation exploring ways the nineteenth-century Asishinaabeg remembered and told their histories. John has also served as a student advisor at USask, and as a research assistant on various projects including the VP Indigenous Engagement's work with the local community to develop an Indigenous engagement strategy.

## **Nicki Ferland**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Red River Métis*

Nicki Ferland is a two-spirit Red River Métis sundancer. Her mother's grandfather was a wheelwright, and the MLA for St. Vital in Louis Riel's provisional government; her father's grandfather established the community of Lorette, a Métis parish, with other Métis bison hunters and farmers. She enjoys spending time with her wife and family, being on the land and canoeing Manitoba's waterways. Nicki is completing her Master of Education in Indigenous land-based education.

## **Whitney Willcott-Benoit**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*St. Albans, Newfoundland*

Whitney is a proud Mi'kmaq First Nations woman from St. Albans, Newfoundland and Labrador. In May 2018, she graduated from Memorial University of Newfoundland with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in psychology. That fall, she began studies at USask, where she is completing her PhD in Clinical Psychology under the supervision of Jorden Cummings (PhD).

## Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy

## **Jocelyne Wasacase-Merasty**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Kahkewistahaw First Nation*

Jocelyne is working on her PhD dissertation in public policy. She and her colleague Jacqueline Woods are developing a creative community-based research project that will encourage a broader definition of PhD research. Jocelyne has worked as a leader with her First Nation, a consultant on Aboriginal governance and as a professional associate with the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. She specializes in the promotion of Indigenous concepts and values of governance.

## School of Rehabilitation Science

## **Kaili Gilroy**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Manitoba Métis Federation*

Kaili is from Swan River and is a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation. She is a second-year student in the Master of Physical Therapy program and completed her Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology degree in 2017 at the University of Regina. After graduation, Kaili plans to return home to help serve the health care needs of her community. In her spare time, Kaili loves to spend time outdoors or at the family cabin.

## COLLEGE OF KINESIOLOGY

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### **Rachel Pelechaty**

#### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Sask River Métis Local #269*

Rachel is involved with the College Park Community Association and leads multiple youth activity programs such as monkey madness, run jump throw and youth on the move. Throughout the summer months, she is a sports/games coordinator for the Playground Program in Prince Albert. She has also been a member of the youth volunteering program at the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert and accumulated over 200 hours there.

## COLLEGE OF LAW

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### **Pam Watson**

#### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*Chacachas Band, Ochapowace First Nation*

Pam is a part of the Chacachas Band and raised on the Ochapowace First Nation. She obtained a Bachelor of Indian Social Work in 2006 and a Master's Certificate in Public Management in 2012. Before attending law school, Pam spent many years working for Indigenous peoples across Canada. Along with attending USask's College of Law, Pam is a crisis response worker and student representative on the Indigenous Bar Association's Board of Directors.

## COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

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### **Elektra Laxdal**

#### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Lac La Ronge Indian Band*

Elektra is a Woodland Cree medical student from Lac La Ronge Indian Band. During her undergraduate studies in kinesiology, she competed with the Huskies track and field team for five years. She volunteers as a coach with Running Wild Athletics, a track and field club focused on Indigenous athletes, and with the Saskatoon Community Health Clinic. In addition to medicine, she is taking courses in global Indigenous health and Plains Cree language.

# COLLEGE OF NURSING

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## **Erica-Rae Desjarlais**

### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Île-à-la-Crosse*

Erica-Rae is a third-year student from Île-à-la-Crosse. She has shown outstanding dedication to her nursing program. She has truly become a leader in her own education. Erica-Rae travels over 600 kilometres weekly to attend labs with the nursing students in La Ronge. Despite being away from her home each week, she has remained a strong student, boasting an academic average over 80 per cent in all years of her program. Erica-Rae's commitment and positive attitude inspire those around her.

## **Summer Gaudet**

### **COMMUNITY AWARD**

*K'at'l'odeeche First Nation/Hay River Dene Reserve, NWT*

Summer is recognized for her outstanding work ethic, which is reflected in her strong grades. Summer was selected as a research assistant for a faculty member in the college and assisted in writing a manuscript, as well as completing a Gender-Based Analysis Plus exercise project. Her performance in these two assignments was exceptional.

## **Requel Rope**

### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Nakota Assiniboine Ceg-A-Kin First Nation (Carry the Kettle)*

Requel (Ganusha É Wásté Wyán – Good Voice Woman) is a fourth-year student in the College of Nursing. Requel's leadership skills are stellar and she always speaks up, takes pride in her culture and educates others around her. Her passion is Indigenous health and how Indigenous world views and spirituality are incorporated into the western system. She has been an advocate to ensure the Blanket Exercise is incorporated into the nursing students' educational experience. She nurtures her fellow students, makes everyone feel included and supports her Indigenous colleagues brilliantly.

## COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND NUTRITION

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### **Chelsea Lussier**

#### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*St. Louis Métis Local #28*

Chelsea is head of the Nutrition Professional Enhancement Committee where she organizes and chairs meetings, assigns fundraising responsibilities and provides information and assistance as needed. Other leadership examples include: working as an optometric assistant; assisting with a local community garden; volunteering with SWITCH and Saskatchewan Health Authority; member of the Saskatoon Canoe Club; fostering rescue dogs with Saskatoon Dog Rescue; representing the nutrition students as a Junior Dietitians of Canada Liaison in correspondence; and relaying Dietitians of Canada information to the student body.

## WESTERN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE (WCVM)

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### **Coral Williams**

#### **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD**

*Interlake band in Manitoba*

Coral Williams is a first-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine student at the WCVM. She has been active throughout her university career, working part-time through the student employment placement program with Manitoba Agriculture, numerous veterinary clinics and Hylife, and is an active tutor for fellow students. Moving forward, she hopes to assist rural communities in Manitoba.

## UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN STUDENTS' UNION

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### **Celeste Robillard**

#### **LEADERSHIP AWARD**

*Yellow Quill First Nation*

Celeste is a 20-year-old student in the Edwards School of Business. She is a member of the Indigenous Business Students' Society (IBSS) and a Member of Student Council for the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU). Her goal is to complete her Bachelor of Commerce and to elevate the Indigenous student experience.