TERMS OF REFERENCE: VISION, MISSION AND VALUES
Prepared by President Peter Stoicheff, December 2015

Goal
To provide the University of Saskatchewan with a proposed new vision, mission and values document, building on the history of institutional dialogue and planning that has shaped the university’s aspirations over the past twenty-two years.

Background
In May 1993, the Board of Governors authorized a University of Saskatchewan Mission Statement that articulated the university’s vision, mission, heritage, values and goals. Although it has served the university well and contains much that is arguably still appropriate to our aspirations, it is now twenty-two years old. During that time, the university has changed on many fronts.

Our total student population has increased significantly in diversity and size. Graduate student numbers have gone up by almost 70%. Several colleges have changed missions and names, three graduate schools have been added and distributed learning has become an important part of what we do. Many academic programs have been introduced, many others terminated. We have developed national-level facilities such as the Canadian Light Source synchrotron and VIDO-InterVac. The 2002 Renewing the Dream strategic directions document, updated in 2010, pointed us toward international standards, academic excellence and sense of place. We now have six signature areas of pre-eminence in research, scholarly and artistic work, have doubled our research revenues and are a member of Canada’s U15 group of research-intensive universities. Over three-quarters of our current faculty members have been hired since we developed our 1993 document.

Rationale for a vision, mission, and values document
In response to this evolution in our size, scope and identity, it is time collectively to express what our mission and values now are, and a vision for our future. As our university makes decisions in response to the opportunities that lie ahead for the post-secondary sector in Canada and beyond, we require consensus on who we are and what we want to achieve. To continue attracting and retaining outstanding faculty, students and staff, we must offer a coherent and compelling vision for our, and thus their, futures. To ensure our continued autonomy and sense of purpose, we must be clear to governments, media, donors and partners about our mission and our goals. To continue to deserve and receive the support of our almost 150,000 alumni, and our many stakeholders both local and worldwide, we owe them an aspirational expression of our values and our commitments to future excellence. I, and the university community to whom I am responsible, must be certain I am representing us accurately at local, national and international levels, and I require consensus on these matters as I begin my term as president.
Rationale for a president’s committee

A recent attempt to produce a new vision, mission and values for the university sparked considerable constructive debate, but failed to culminate in a new document. The president’s committee is intended to revisit and complete the task in an efficient and consultative manner. A small, dedicated group, co-chaired by two faculty members, that gathers and is informed by the university’s planning efforts since 1993, will avoid a cumbersome and otherwise potentially repetitive process and is most likely to achieve the goal in a timely manner. As president, I will be a resource in this exercise, but will not be a member of the committee.

Committee membership

1. Two co-chairs drawn from the permanent academic staff: Brent Cotter (Law) and Liz Harrison (Physical Therapy)
2. A senior member of the university’s administrative staff: Tom Crosson (Risk Management)
3. An Aboriginal member of the university’s administrative staff or faculty: Liz Duret (HR Inclusion and Diversity)
4. A student leader: Scott Adams (3rd year Medicine)
5. An Elder: Harry Lafond (Office of the Treaty Commissioner)
6. A member of the Board of Governors: Lee Ahenakew
7. A member of University Council: Wendy Roy (Dept. of English)
8. A member of Senate: Karen Prisciak (ASK LLP)

The president will appoint all members of the committee.

Process and timeline

The committee will begin its work in January 2016 by gathering and distilling the main features of previous university documents including the 1993 mission statement, the 2002/2010 Renewing the Dream strategic directions document, the university’s and colleges’ three integrated plans, and any other relevant background material. Consultation internally and externally will take place next, as determined by the committee. On the basis of that background and consultation work, the committee will draft new vision, mission and values language and bring that back to the university community for further consultation.

Once the committee has agreed upon a draft statement, ideally by April 2016, it will be shared with me and, assuming I believe the committee’s work has met the high standard expected, I will share the draft with University Council, the Senate and the Board of Governors. After fulsome discussion and feedback, all three bodies will be invited to endorse the new statement in late spring and fall 2016 as determined by their meeting schedules and agendas.