

Vision Statement

Both the University of Regina and JSGS are at the end of their respective strategic plans. JSGS, moreover, will undergo an external unit review next year. Our path forward will be the subject of careful collective thinking and conversation over the next year. I look forward to leading in that collaborative work but want, in this document, to clearly specify the directions I believe that JSGS can grow in as we pursue our vision of “being Saskatchewan’s world-class policy school that educates, informs, and engages with public policy and administration.”

I am excited by these possibilities because I see in them an alignment between the strategic opportunities of JSGS and my own values. I believe strongly that academe is a form of public service. Lasting impact is achieved through the creation of strong teams and the connection of those teams with the communities, and especially the students, that they serve. Good student outcomes and productive research are not the product of individual effort alone. Rather, they are the product of scholars working together within a healthy institutional framework and culture, in close collaboration with empowered non-academic staff, and deeply engaged with the diverse communities around them.

That path forward builds on the real strengths developed by a on a focus on our students, staff, and faculty over the last five years: a renewed MOU affirming JSGS as a unique partnership between the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, close collaboration with the Saskatchewan public service, renewed and accessible academic programming, an inclusive staff and faculty culture, and significant research strength. I want to ensure that our students continue to have an excellent academic experience, that Executive Education continues to help public sector partners develop the next generation of leaders, and that our faculty and staff have an inclusive and engaging environment. Looking at the next five years, there are four substantive opportunities for the School: Health Care and Digital Programming, Truth and Reconciliation, Training Partnerships, and Engaged Research. Fulfilling the promise of these opportunities will require leadership effort in a fifth area, Advancement and Development.

Health Care and Digital Programming

JSGS's Masters of Health Administration was one of Canada's first and the ability to specialize in Health Information and Information Management is also unique. This program has been successful because of the excellent work of the faculty members involved and the clear need for leadership and policy development expertise in the health field. The MHA is in the midst of significant faculty renewal. Once this renewal is completed, I hope to deepen those external partnerships with an especial focus on helping both programs renew their connection to industry and government partners. This is also the program which reaches the broadest domestic market and would reward an intensive recruitment campaign.

Truth and Reconciliation

JSGS offers both credit and not-for-credit programs in partnership with First Nations University of Canada. At its USASK campus, it is home to the Research Chair in Métis Governance and Policy and, through that Chair, an organizational partnership with the Métis Nation. JSGS also has a significant number of First Nation and Métis alumni, especially from its research programs. But we need to do much more to build close relationships with First Nations and Métis communities and to ensure our students are trained in a way that enables them to engage in Reconciliation and that we do what we can to support the development of policy and administration capacity in First Nations and Métis governments. This work requires we have a sufficient complement of First Nations and Métis faculty and staff who can lead in this area, a careful evaluation of our curriculum to ensure all students receive sufficient training, and – I hope – the creation of a cohort experience for First Nations and Métis students who are already working in the field but who would benefit from graduate training as they move into leadership. When a genuine partnership is built with Métis and First Nations communities, I believe that the opportunity exists to find private sector financial support to support this work.

Training Partnerships

JSGS's Executive Education unit has been uniquely successful. Operating on a cost recovery basis, it is a trusted partner of the provincial public service as it navigates a once in a generation need for training and leadership support. It elevates our academic programming through the support and mentorship of an exceptional cohort of public service leaders. Its experiencing significant growth in providing services to municipalities and an established track record working with First Nations University of Canada to deliver training to them. I would hope to see this success continue and to continue to work on productive synergies between it and the academic part of the school.

JSGS's internship program provides a key experiential learning opportunity for our students and is very attractive to international students. There is work to be done to deepen and maintain our relationship with the province but, even more, to find ways to partner with municipal and federal governments for both not for credit training, experiential learning opportunities, and to make our academic programming more visible to working

professionals. We have more students who want internships than we can place – work done on building relationships could help here. This would be especially valuable for our international students seeking to launch Canadian careers.

Engaged Research

Some of our external partnerships are very focussed on training. But, often, external partners look to JSGS for research and expertise. The ability to partner on research is crucial to our reputation and our mission as a policy school. We have had some real successes in doing this engaged research. MITACs and Future Skills Centre projects, courses built around policy research for partners, and some excellent examples of community engaged research all exist now. But, I would like find ways to move this work from being episodic and the product of individual faculty connections to something more organized and integral to the regular operation of JSGS. This means finding ways to support and resource the connection of academic research with applied partners in ways that respect the different timelines and expectations from both academic and non-academic sides.

We're also sought out by both our alumni and by external partners to provide a space for serious discussion about policy matters. This is an important branding tool for the School but it is also – and more importantly – a critical public good in deeply polarized times. We are a place where people can have hard conversations and I hope to make more of this convenor role

Advancement and Development

For JSGS to have the resources necessary to deliver on the four areas of promise identified above, as well as to help support its diverse student body, it does need to broaden its revenue sources. Executive Education is already developing significant new business lines and recruitment efforts for the academic programs are proving helpful and have further promise. I believe we also have a compelling case for philanthropic support to those foundations, agencies, and individual supporters interested in supporter better public policy. Committed engagement with the work of advancement and development will be an important way I can ensure that JSGS develops its potential going forward.

Jim Farney
February 7 2025