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Director’s Report

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www.usaskstudies.coop
The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives has been the site of some exciting events over the past year.

There was the completion of a unique, multi-year, million-dollar research project that resulted in the launch of a brand-new, independent, western-Canada-wide co-operative development agency: in short, research changing the world of co-ops.

There is a new chair in co-operative governance, and a new strategic plan, on the basis of which the Centre aims to revolutionize academic and practical understanding of how co-operative organizations work: in other words, ambitious research to change the future of co-operatives.

We welcomed two new Centre Fellows, who will broaden the base of the Centre’s teaching and research capacity.

Working within the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, we have developed a new interdisciplinary graduate certificate for in-depth understanding of the social economy and co-operatives. The certificate offers leading-edge knowledge delivered by innovative means to present and potential co-op leaders.

We launched a new online repository of teaching materials about co-operatives.

The Centre initiated the first-ever and first annual survey of top issues on the minds of co-operative leaders across Canada. We learned surprising things and look forward to making this a regular part of the Centre’s engagement with the co-operative sector: practical experience informing research.

We sponsored and organized the first annual Co-operative Case Study Competition, educating the next generation of young scholars about co-ops.

We shipped 2,300 surplus books from our library to a fledgling university in Africa, contributing to co-operative education abroad.

The Centre is commemorating the enormous co-operative contributions of the late Dr. Ian MacPherson through a new lecture series in his honour. Through The MacPherson Talks, we will bring world co-op thinkers to present their ideas in person and over the Internet, using our academic connections to leverage global knowledge for the co-op public.

All of these activities were new this past year and most are intended to become permanent, ongoing contributions by the Centre. In short, this was an amazing year. We have expanded our role and our ambitions even as we deal with important transitions in our faculty and as we seek new partnerships with co-operatives.

Our Centre continues to earn recognition nationally and internationally as one of the world’s leaders in interdisciplinary co-operative knowledge. Our researchers won applause and in one case an award from co-operative meetings that ranged from Ottawa, Red Deer, and Regina to Turkey, Paris, and Spain.

All of these accomplishments have been the result of many years of work by many people, including notably by the Centre’s director Murray Fulton, who will be returning from sabbatical shortly. I am glad to have filled in for him this past year and to continue to be a part of the Centre’s outstanding successes.
Preamble
Since its creation in the early 1980s, the Centre has created public value by generating knowledge about co-operatives for the co-operative sector, government officials, and wider publics. An external review in 2011 found that the Centre has become “an international model for interdisciplinary teaching, research, and engagement” that has served co-operatives well and brought “renown” to its host university. Co-operatives, societal actors, policy makers, and educators come to us frequently for knowledge about co-operatives. Our new challenge is to become the most outstanding centre of our kind in the world. We are close to this goal and can achieve it within five years if we focus our efforts wisely.

Planning Principles
• Our audiences are those who seek advanced knowledge about co-operatives, whether inside or outside the sector, across Canada and further afield.
• Our research and teaching are centrally about the things we see going on in co-operatives. There are not only things for people to learn about co-ops, but things to learn from co-ops.
• Our studies encompass a wide or general level: theory applicable to all kinds of co-operatives. Specific projects include a spectrum from conceptual or theoretical research through empirical studies, action research, applied studies, and training.
• We have a strategy to engage in committed relationships with co-op-sector partners; we seek ways for our work to have impact on federal, provincial, municipal, Indigenous, and international agencies and governments.

The Plan
Based on our principles, the Centre is committed to accomplishing the following prioritised tasks in the next five years:

1. We will generate new co-operative knowledge in three focal areas and gain national and international recognition for our contributions.
   • We will create advanced understanding of the co-operative model: theorising, historicising, and indigenising the co-operative identity, values, and principles.
   • We will develop a Centre for the Study of Co-operatives model of co-operative governance that goes beyond all previous formulations and is applicable to analysis of real-life cases.
   • We will extend existing work on measurement of the co-op difference and on the social, economic, and cultural impact of co-operatives.

2. We will launch an internationally known certificate program that will set the standard for advanced interdisciplinary study of co-operatives.

3. We will support broad co-operative education at the postsecondary level across Canada and internationally.

4. Through our research, publications, and outreach activities, we will hold a mirror to the world of co-operatives. We will be recognized as a primary source of knowledge and understanding about what is going on broadly in the sector.

Key Enablers
Our core faculty and staff; our network of contacts and relationships in the co-op sector; our funding model, which enables pursuit of long-term public-service goals; and our proactive program of strategic communications activities

Foundational Partnerships
The Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, the University of Saskatchewan, and our sector partners — Saskatchewan Credit Unions, Federated Co-operatives Limited, Concentra Financial, The Co-operators, and CHS Inc.
CRS Chair in Co-operative Governance

Left to right: Dusty MacDonald, board chair, Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL), Murray Fulton, Centre director, and Scott Banda, CEO of FCL.

In fall 2015, Centre Director Murray Fulton was appointed to the Co-operative Retailing System (CRS) Chair in Co-operative Governance. Funded by Federated Co-operatives Limited, the $300,000 position will extend over a five-year term. The CRS Chair will augment Murray’s research focused on enabling co-ops to operate more effectively and will help solidify the Centre’s reputation as a global leader in co-operative research. It also reinforces the university’s commitment to making a meaningful contribution to economic and social development within communities.

Two New Centre Fellows

We’re thrilled to announce the appointment of two new Centre Fellows — long-time Centre supporter Isobel Findlay from the Department of Management and Marketing at the Edwards School of Business and Eric Micheels from the Department of Bioresource Policy, Business, and Economics in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources.

Co-operative Innovation Project Update

This innovative two-year project funded by Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) came to a conclusion in December 2015. Its goal was to help rural and Aboriginal communities determine whether the co-op model could be applied as a practical solution to needs identified by the communities themselves. CIP team members contacted 649 communities in western Canada during the course of their work.

The success of the CIP project resulted in a further five-year, $5 million commitment from FCL, which will provide critical start-up funding for Co-operatives First, a nonprofit organization that will facilitate a new wave of co-operative development in western Canada.

The CIP project was a unique partnership between a research unit and a business organization, a test of whether university-based research could lead to solutions to real-world problems. The creation of Co-operatives First suggests that it can, and we are proud to have been part of the process.

Top Co-op Issues 2016

In fall 2015, the Centre canvassed Canada’s co-op leaders, including CEOs and managers, board members and academics, on their views about the top issues currently facing co-operative organizations. Our forty-six key informants were remarkably consistent in identifying their most pressing concerns, which we have organized under themes that include access to capital, governance, member commitment, youth engagement, and public awareness of the co-op model.

The poster found here itemizes the top twelve themes and highlights the top three issues, including respondents’ suggestions for action.
Graduate Certificate in the Social Economy and Co-operatives

Our new master’s certificate was offered for the first time beginning in September 2015 and has generated considerable interest. Not even a year into the program, we’re already developing an innovative new delivery method to make it accessible to more students and working professionals across the country and around the world. The new blended-delivery model, with both online and in-person courses, will be offered in September 2016. With classes taught by Centre Fellows, the certificate is offered through our affiliate, the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. Find more information about the certificate here.

New Online Resources

We have a new web page devoted to online teaching resources on co-operatives. Currently there are videos of seminars, lectures, and special presentations, as well as case studies and Centre booklets, all freely available for downloading. We are working on a case study series and more of these will become available as they are completed. The online resources page is also under development and we invite you to watch for new links to a variety of additional materials.
The 2015 CASC Conference

Co-operatives: Capital Idea(s)!
Ottawa was the venue 2–4 June 2015 for the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Studies in Co-operation (CASC). The Centre, CASC’s administrative home, was well represented by six Centre Fellows and staff, four Centre Scholars, four people from the Co-op Innovation Project, and two students, all of whom made presentations, chaired sessions, and/or served on panels.

Nearly seventy presentations on a huge array of topics kept participants engaged and challenged.

The event included the usual collaboration with a number of other professional associations, and organizers also worked with On Co-op, le Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité, and Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada to provide a special day for practitioners. See the full CASC program here.

New this year was the inaugural Co-op Case Study Competition organized by the Centre’s Audra Krueger (see details below). Of special note was the award to Centre Fellow Brett Fairbairn.

CASC Award of Merit
Brett was honoured in June 2015 with the CASC Award of Merit, which recognizes an individual’s outstanding leadership and contributions to the field of co-operative studies, their mentorship of students and others in understanding the intricate workings of co-ops, and their ongoing support of CASC. Few have done as much as Brett to address the real-life challenges faced by co-operators, to document insights, and to chronicle and nourish the vibrant growth of the movement. Read more here.

Co-operative Case Study Competition
On 1–3 June 2015, a talented group of graduate students met in Ottawa at the CASC conference to learn more about co-ops. This inaugural Co-op Case Study Competition, organized by the Centre’s Audra Krueger, attracted nine students from across North America. Their task was to assess the situation facing the co-op under study, analyze the available information, and craft the best options for the organization. The students had the additional challenge of presenting their analyses and solutions using a modified Three Minute Thesis style. Read more here.

Participants in the Co-op Case Study Competition held during the 2015 CASC conference. Left to right: Natalie Witschorik (Iowa State University) and Sarah Adams Inkoom (South Dakota State University)
The MacPherson Talks

The MacPherson Talks is a new seminar series at the Centre honouring the late Dr. Ian MacPherson, one of the leading lights of the international co-operative movement. Historian, educator, author, and passionate co-operator, Ian personified the relationship between Canadian co-operative academics and co-op practitioners. There will be one talk annually at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, featuring an international co-operative scholar or practitioner whose work reflects the values that Ian held dear. Read more about Ian here.

Centre Seminar Series 2015

March “Laying the Cornerstones for a New National Credit Union Trade Association”
Marc-André Pigeon, Credit Union Central of Canada

April “How Can Co-ops Become More Productive and More Profitable?”
Avner Ben-Ner, Center for Human Resources and Labor Studies, University of Minnesota

May “Governance Issues in Multilevel Co-operative Bank Networks”
Ivana Catturani, European Research Institute on Co-operative and Social Enterprises

November “On the Curious Case of Co-operative Capital”
Brent Hueth, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives

November “When Big Co-ops Fail”
Peter Couchman, Plunkett Foundation, UK

Research and Seminars

Research at the Centre

• Problems at Co-op Atlantic
• Why Big Co-ops Fail
• Co-op and University Partnerships
• Governance and Member Engagement at the Saskatoon Co-operative Association
• “Demutualization of Co-ops and Mutuals,” (Canada), completed
• “Examining Success Factors for Sustainable Rural Development through the Integrated Co-operative Model,” (Canada), completed
• “The Impacts of Credit Unions on Communities,” completed
• “Developing and Sustaining Communities: The Role of Co-operatives,” completed
• Indigenous conceptions of governance and the relationship to co-op organizational models
• Leadership, innovation, and cultural change at FCL and in the co-op retailing system
• Social innovation in German renewable-energy co-operatives
• History of the co-op movement in Germany
• The governance of federations
• Leadership and governance in higher education
• Theory and case studies of governance and innovation in co-operatives
• Co-op options for community pastures
• Canadian Co-operative Films

Check the Centre’s website for in-depth information about these and other research activities.

New

New

New

The MacPherson Talks

Ian MacPherson

Marc-André Pigeon

Avner Ben-Ner

Brent Hueth

Peter Couchman

www.usaskstudies.coop
December “Co-operatives and the Saskatchewan Disability Strategy” (the Hartley and Margaret Fredeen Scholarship in Co-operative Studies Seminar)

Victoria Taras, PhD Candidate,
Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy

Find information about upcoming and former seminars here.

Student Poster Presentations 2015

Our January seminar spot was taken over by students in the class Co-operatives in the New Economy: Institutions, Governance, and Policy, who prepared posters for an event titled “Analyzing Co-op Policy Cases.” The students tackled questions such as: Are tax incentives for co-op development good public policy? Was the Co-op Development Initiative a useful policy tool? and Should government legislate governance practices for co-ops?

You can see all six posters here.

Visiting Scholars

Ivana Catturani, a postdoctoral fellow from the University of Trento in Italy, was with us from February to May 2015 supported by a fellowship from the Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme. Her work at the Centre focussed on Canadian financial co-ops, particularly the Desjardins model in Quebec. Ivana presented our May seminar.

In mid-September, visiting scholars Carlo Borzaga from the University of Trento in Italy and Silvia Sacchetti from the Open University in the UK joined us for a full week of activities, including a public seminar and reception, a Centre-based presentation, and a day-long invited workshop on governance that included Centre Fellows and Scholars, students, and staff.

Carlo and Silvia also visited a number of co-operatives and other social enterprises as well as attending daily breakfast, lunch, and dinner meetings with Centre Fellows and Scholars.

Carlo presented the inaugural seminar in The MacPherson Talks, which honour the late Dr. Ian MacPherson and will be an annual event at the Centre.

Silvia, who conducts research with Carlo at the European Research Institute on Co-operative and Social Enterprises, gave a presentation to Centre personnel on the multistakeholder governance model. Sylvia and Carlo’s research fits well with some of the work currently being undertaken at the Centre and we have plans for further collaboration.
Awards for Centre Contract Partners
Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) retained top spot in *SaskBusiness* magazine’s 2015 list of the 100 largest companies in Saskatchewan as well as being named Business of the Year. The company is in the top 50 of the *Financial Post* magazine’s rankings of the 500 largest companies in Canada, as well as among the Corporate Knights ranking of the Best 50 Corporate Citizens in Canada. In addition, FCL was named Fairtrade Retailer of the Year at the 2015 Canadian Fairtrade Awards, where it also won the award for Excellence in Merchandising.

Concentra Financial was once again named one of Canada’s Best Managed Companies, retaining its status as a Platinum Club member.

SaskCentral was named one of the best medium-sized workplace in Canada for 2015 by the Great Place to Work® Institute Canada. It was also honoured as one of Canada’s best workplace for women among companies of any size.

The Co-operators has been recognized as among the top ten on Corporate Knights’ list of the Best 50 Corporate Citizens in Canada. It also earned the 2015 J.D. Power Canadian Home Insurance award in the Ontario/Atlantic region. And the company has been listed among the 50 Most Socially Responsible Corporations in Canada, a list compiled by Sustainalytics for *Maclean’s* magazine.

Finally, CHS Inc. ranked 25 among the top 150 best workplaces in Minnesota by Workplace-Dynamics.

New Publications
*Co-operatives for Sustainable Communities: Tools to Measure Co-operative Impact and Performance* (co-published with Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada) explores five interconnected themes related to co-operative reporting practices and community impact.

*What went wrong at Co-op Atlantic? Governance as a Determinant of Success and Failure: What Other Co-ops Can Learn from Co-op Atlantic* looks at the governance choices and behaviours that led to the failure of this once-strong organization.

*When Big Co-ops Fail* examines some catastrophic failures of large-scale co-operatives around the world and identifies five factors that can dramatically increase the chance of survival for individual co-ops.

*The Fifth Co-operative Principle: Mapping the Co-operative Educational Initiatives of Canadian Co-operatives* explores the application of the fifth co-operative principle — education, training and information — within Canadian co-ops.

Find easy access to all Centre publications here.
Books for Africa

When the Centre’s library moved to Special Collections at the university’s main library, we ended up with a lot of duplicate materials — 68 boxes filled with 2,300 books, to be exact. Coincidentally, we were involved at the same time in a large project on rural co-op development with a fledgling university in Africa — Moshi Co-operative University, located at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Moshi’s library resources were limited and our duplicate materials were a perfect fit. So we shipped 1140 kg — 2.5 tons — of books to Tanzania, delighted to be in the position to make this contribution to co-operative education abroad.

Center Scholars

CSC Scholars are associates who are actively involved in teaching, theoretical or applied research, and/or outreach education concerning co-operatives. Meet our Centre Scholars here.

Conferences and Workshops

Centre personnel took part in more than forty conferences and workshops during 2015. Find more information here, as well as details about upcoming events.

Information for Students

Check out the Student Portal on the home page of our website for information about scholarships and bursaries, co-operative courses and programs, and other resources.

Summer Interns

The Centre was fortunate to have secured the research skills of Mitacs students Apoorva Gupta and Mariana Lopez-Gomez from May to August 2015. Apoorva, from Chandigarh, India, is working on an MA in development studies at the Indian Institute of Technology–Madras in India, while Mariana, from Guadalajara, Mexico, is working on an undergraduate degree in international relations at the University of Guadalajara.

Mitacs is a national, not-for-profit organization that supports innovative research and training programs across Canada, working closely with partners in industry, academia, and government.

A Few Final Notes
People at the Centre

Left to right, top to bottom: Brett Fairbairn, acting director, professor, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS); Murray Fulton, director (on sabbatical leave), professor, JSGS; Lou Hammond Ketilson, adjunct professor, JSGS; Michael Gertler, associate professor, College of Arts and Science; Dionne Pohler, assistant professor, JSGS; Isobel Findlay, professor, Edwards School of Business; Eric Micheels, associate professor, College of Agriculture and Bioresources; Nora Russell, publications and communications officer; Audra Krueger, research, education, and liaison officer; Patty Scheidl, office manager; Karen Neufeldt, clerical assistant; Darcy Overland, research manager, Co-operative Innovation Project (CIP); Wu Haotao, data analyst, CIP; Merle Massie, research officer, CIP; Kyle White, community engagement officer, CIP. Missing: Duy Huang, IT specialist.
Left to right, top to bottom: Glen Tully, board chair, former board chair, Federated Co-operatives Limited; Glenn Bohay, The Co-operators Group; Corina Farbacher, Concentra Financial; Laverne Goodsman, SaskCentral; Brent Hueth, director, University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives; William Nelson, president, CHS Foundation, CHS Inc.; Marc-André Pigeon, Credit Union Central of Canada; Brad Schultz, Federated Co-operatives Limited; Toddi Steelman, executive director, School of Environment and Sustainability, U of S; and Martine Vezina, HEC Montreal.
# Financials

## Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balance for the Year Ended 30 June 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-op Sector Contribution</td>
<td>348,371</td>
<td>355,163.50</td>
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<td>University of Saskatchewan Contribution</td>
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<td>348,725.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government of Saskatchewan Contribution</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Space — in-Kind</td>
<td>26,561</td>
<td>26,561.00</td>
<td>26,561.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>860.45</td>
<td>307.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visiting Scholars &amp; Special Projects Funds</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budgeted Transfer from Reserve Fund</td>
<td>70,000</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Revenue</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>18,770.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overhead Revenue</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1,988.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transfer from CHS Project</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>80,000.00</td>
<td>80,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$875,803</td>
<td>$832,068.48</td>
<td>$1,105,939.78</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

|                         |                |                |                |
| **Expenditures**        |                |                |                |
| Salaries                |                |                |                |
| Academic in-Kind         | $237,086       | $237,086.00    | $449,776.00    |
| Support Staff Salary and Benefits | 376,458       | 383,579.75     | 403,613.25     |
| Sessional Lecturer Support | 0             | 0              | 14,300.00      |
| Director Salary & Benefits | 5,000         | 5,094.44       | 82,209.23      |
| New BPBE Faculty Position | 70,000        | 70,000.00      | 70,000.00      |
| Transfer to JSGS         | 100,000        | 100,000.00     | 0              |
| Visiting Scholars & Special Projects Fund | 0              | 0              | 3,878.26       |
| Material & Supplies      | 2,000           | 1,406.75       | 1,736.34       |
| Printing                 | 5,000           | 2,798.10       | 1,195.82       |
| Postage, Courier         | 1,500           | 1,224.87       | 485.55         |
| Telephone                | 2,000           | 333.60         | 1,299.72       |
| Public Relations         | 8,500           | 9,692.54       | 8,240.89       |
| Travel                   | 17,500          | 19,637.79      | 15,769.73      |
| Library Acquisitions     | 0              | 0              | 1,876.42       |
| Equipment & Maintenance  | 0              | 0              | 6,352.50       |
| IT Support               | 15,000          | 8,505.00       | 0              |
| Miscellaneous            | 2,624           | 2,859.47       | 1,485.98       |
| Research                 | 3,575           | 12,157.63      | 8,874.94       |
| Dues & Memberships       | 3,000           | 2,394.72       | 2,818.97       |
| Office Space             | 26,561          | 26,561.00      | 26,561.00      |
| Interfund Transfer       | 0              | 0              | 70,000.00      |
| **Total**                | $875,804        | $883,331.66    | $1,170,474.60  |

|                         |                |                |                |
| **Excess of Revenues over Expenditures** | $-1            | -51,263.18     | -64,534.82     |
| **Fund Balance, Beginning of Year**      | 208,545.89     | 208,545.89     | 273,080.71     |
| **Fund Balance, End of Year**            | $157,282.71    | $157,282.71    | $208,545.89    |

## Balance Sheet for Year Ended 30 June 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$149,911.44</td>
<td>$217,616.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities and Fund Balance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fund Balance</td>
<td>157,282.71</td>
<td>208,545.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$165,797.21</td>
<td>$290,945.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Centre for the Study of Co-operatives is an interdisciplinary teaching and research unit located on the University of Saskatchewan campus in Saskatoon.

Our contract partners in the co-operative sector include:

- Saskatchewan Credit Unions
- Federated Co-operatives Limited
- Concentra Financial
- The Co-operators
- CHS Inc.

The Centre is also supported by the University of Saskatchewan and is formally affiliated with the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. The university not only houses our offices but provides in-kind contributions from a number of departments and units as well as financial assistance with operations and nonsalary expenditures. We acknowledge with gratitude the ongoing support of all our partner organizations.

The Centre’s objectives are

- to develop and offer university courses that provide an understanding of co-operative theory, principles, development, structures, and legislation
- to undertake original research into co-operatives
- to publish co-operative research by Centre staff and other researchers