

## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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# **SIAS applauds degree-granting report**

*Institute prepared to expand spectrum of applied education in province*

**August 26, 2011** – SIAS welcomed a report released today that recommends the expansion of degree-granting status in Saskatchewan.

“The report recognizes that non-university institutes such as SIAS bring significant assets to baccalaureate-level applied education,” says SIAS president and CEO Dr. Robert G. McCulloch. “We already respond to labour market demand with career-focused certificate and diploma programs, and we have the expertise to expand that programming to include degrees when warranted by contemporary needs.”

The recommendation to expand degree-granting beyond Saskatchewan’s two universities, was among several made by Alex Usher of Higher Education Strategy Associates, who was commissioned by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, to study the issue.

SIAS is particularly interested in the opportunity to add baccalaureate programs where demand for degree qualifications of an applied nature is growing and where doing so would leverage SIAS’s expertise, Dr. McCulloch said. SIAS meets the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, standards for assessing new degree-granting institutions, he added, pointing out that SIAS already offers transfer credits to university programs.

Conferring degree-granting status on SIAS would increase access and choice for baccalaureate level education in Saskatchewan, while capitalizing on existing expertise. It would also increase access to higher education for non-traditional students. SIAS successfully meets the needs of populations traditionally under-represented at universities, and has more Aboriginal students, for instance, than any post-secondary institution in the province.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 15,000 students were enrolled in SIAST programs in the most recent academic year; additionally, the organization drew almost 25,000 individual course registrations. Through program and course registrations, SIAST served almost 26,000 distinct students with programs that touch every sector of the economy. SIAST operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

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