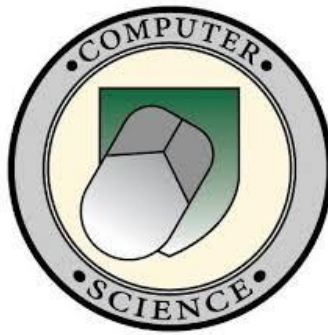




COMPUTER SCIENCE GRADUATE COUNCIL (CSGC)

University of Saskatchewan

Annual Plan

2026 – 2027

A comprehensive program of research, professional development, career, and community-building activities for graduate students in the Department of Computer Science.

Purpose and Overview

The Computer Science Graduate Council (CSGC) exists to support the academic, professional, and personal development of graduate students in the Department of Computer Science. This Annual Plan sets out the Council's program of activities for the 2026–2027 academic year, organized around six pillars: research dissemination, community and social connection, exposure to research and industry practice, peer-to-peer learning, professional-skills development, and career preparation.

Each pillar is designed to sustain engagement throughout the year rather than deliver one-off events, so graduate students have a predictable, recurring set of opportunities to engage with peers, faculty, and the broader research and industry community. The plan below describes each activity area in detail, followed by a month-by-month calendar and a consolidated budget request.

1. Research Fest 2026

Research Fest is the Council's flagship annual event: a student-led, department-wide research conference that gives graduate students a platform to present their work to peers, faculty, and guests. The event combines the rigor of an academic conference with a social, low-pressure atmosphere, making it an accessible venue for students at every stage of their degree, from first-year MSc students presenting preliminary ideas to senior PhD candidates showcasing mature research.

The Fest features poster sessions **or** oral 3-minute presentations (not both), keynotes or invited academic and industry talks, startup introductions, and networking time. It closes with an awards ceremony recognizing outstanding student research and the best supervisor of the year. Key components include:

- Poster Presentations: organizing 3 sessions for poster presentations. All students will present their posters to the judges and the CS audience.
- Best MSc/PhD Research Awards: recognizing the strongest overall research contributions at each degree level, judged by a faculty panel.
- Women in STEM Award: recognizing women in a graduate program in Computer Science or Bioinformatics.
- Best Supervisor Award: a peer-nominated award recognizing a faculty supervisor who has demonstrated exceptional mentorship.

2. Social Activities

Graduate school can be isolating, particularly for international students, students working primarily with a single supervisor, or those in the writing-heavy final stages of a thesis. The Council's social program is intended to counter that isolation by creating frequent, low-barrier opportunities for graduate students to build relationships outside the lab. Rather than a handful of large events, the program emphasizes a steady rhythm of smaller, recurring gatherings so that community-building becomes a habit rather than an occasional event.

Planned activities for 2026–2027 include:

- **Seasonal parties:** welcome and end-of-year celebrations marking the start and close of the academic year.
- **Monthly coffee social (e.g., first Monday of each month):** an informal, drop-in gathering with no agenda beyond conversation and coffee.
- **Social nights:** casual evenings built around games, trivia, or similar low-cost activities.
- **Movie nights:** on-campus screenings, offering a relaxed alternative to study-focused evenings.
- **Holiday gathering:** a December social marking the end of the fall term.
- **BBQs:** warm-weather outdoor gatherings, typically held in early fall and late spring.
- **Restaurant visits:** subsidized group outings to local restaurants to encourage students to explore the city together.
- **Potluck:** a low-cost, community-driven meal where students contribute a dish to share.
- **End-of-semester dinner:** a slightly more formal dinner marking the close of the fall and winter semesters.
- **Coffee with a Professor:** informal coffee sessions pairing one or two faculty members with graduate students, giving students exposure to faculty outside their own supervisory relationship and demystifying faculty–student interaction.

Collectively, these activities are intended to run in parallel with academic and professional programming, ensuring that community-building is never crowded out by the busier stretches of the academic calendar.

3. Research and Industry Seminars

This seminar series exposes graduate students to research and practice happening outside the department by inviting external speakers (both academic researchers from other universities and practitioners from industry) to present their recent work. The series is intentionally limited to **four** sessions across the academic year so that each session can be well-promoted, well-attended, and treated as a departmental event rather than a routine occurrence.

- **Academic sessions:** researchers from other universities present recent studies, giving students exposure to methods, open problems, and collaboration opportunities beyond the department.
- **Industry sessions:** practitioners and applied researchers from industry present on current problems and practices, helping students connect academic training to real-world application.

Each session is structured as a formal talk (45–60 minutes) followed by an extended question period and an informal reception, which gives students a chance to speak with the visiting speaker directly, often the most valuable part of the event for students exploring collaboration, internship, or post-graduation opportunities.

4. CS Student Talks

The CS Graduate Student Seminar Series is a recurring, informal venue for graduate students themselves to present their work-in-progress. Where Research Fest is a polished, once-a-year showcase, this series is deliberately low-stakes: it is built around the idea of "**what I'm working on**" talks that let students think out loud, get early feedback, and practice presenting before results are finalized.

- **Format:** 30 minutes, held on the first Monday of each month.

- **Content:** one or two MSc/PhD students each give a 10-15 minute informal presentation on their current research, followed by open questions and discussion.
- **Audience:** primarily PhD students sharing progress updates, with master's students also encouraged to use the series to host **informal** MSc thesis presentations.
- **Atmosphere:** casual and discussion-driven, often followed by informal socializing, reinforcing the connection between the academic and community-building goals of the Council.

Because the series runs monthly and requires minimal logistical overhead, it also serves as a reliable way to keep the department's research community engaged with each other's work between the larger annual events.

5. Professional-Development Workshops

This is the largest and most varied component of the plan: a set of skills-focused workshops addressing the practical, non-curricular competencies that graduate students need but are rarely taught directly in coursework. Given the number of possible topics, the Council will select **four** workshops for delivery in 2026–2027, prioritized based on a needs survey of the graduate student body, while keeping the remaining topics as a standing list for future terms. Topics under consideration include:

- High-Performance Computing: an introduction to compute clusters, job scheduling, and resource allocation for research workloads.
- Programming with AI (Claude Code): practical training on using AI coding assistants effectively and responsibly in research and software projects.
- Resume reviews, run in partnership with the university Career Centre.
- Grant and scholarship proposal Writing.

Each workshop is planned as a 60-90 minute hands-on or interactive session, led either by a faculty member, an external facilitator, or Career Centre staff, and is followed by a Q&A period. Where appropriate, workshops will be recorded or accompanied by written resources so that students who are unable to attend live can still benefit from the material.

6. Annual Program (2026–2027)

To give this plan a consistent identity, the Council will brand its recurring programming as the "CS Graduate Student Development Series," with at least one Council-run event happening every month of the academic year. The recurring cadence for each activity area is:

- **Social Activities:** every month.
- **Informal CS Student Talks:** every month.
- **Research and Industry Seminars:** four times per academic year.
- **Professional-Development Workshops:** four workshops per academic year.

Each of the activities is chaired by 2 executive members as follows:

- **Social events:** Nibir and Tarunnyamoye
- **Professional-Development Workshop series:** Mohammad Mahdi Moayeri and Leila Moghaddam Moghanloo
- **CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue:** Farhana Alam and Sukhrob Ikromov
- **Research and Industry Seminar #2 (Online):** Arijit Das and Emily Vandermeer
- **Research Fest 2026:** Aditi Dhali and Biraj Saha Aronya

The month-by-month calendar below consolidates these commitments into a single planning reference.

Month	Planned Activity
September	New Graduate Student Orientation; welcome social, program overview, and introduction to CSGC activities for incoming students.
October	CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue Professional-Development Workshop series #1 (DevFest Saskatoon 2026) (In-person)
November	Professional-Development Workshop series #2 (High-Performance Computing workshop) (In-person) CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue (In-person)
December	Holiday Social: end-of-term celebration and gathering. CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue; Research and Industry Seminar #1 (Online)
January	CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue (In-person) Professional-Development Workshop #3 (Programming with AI (Claude Code)) (In-person)
February	Research Fest: flagship annual research conference, poster/oral competitions, and awards. Career and Industry Event (CS Graduate Career Series).
March	Research and Industry Seminar #2 (Online) CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue (In-person)
April	Professional-Development Workshop # 4 (e.g., How to Write a Grant) (Online) CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue (In-person) Social/Movie night / Game night/ informal gathering (+ Dinner);
May	Research and Industry Seminar #3 (Online) CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue OR Coffee with a Professor.
June	Professional-Development Workshop # 5 (Resume review event support) (In-person) Summer BBQ or Lunch CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue (In-person)
July	Research and Industry Seminar #4 (Online) CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue (In-person)
August	Wrap-up of the academic year, feedback survey, and preparation for New Graduate Student Orientation. CS Student Talks (monthly) and Coffee Social continue (In-person)

This calendar is a planning baseline rather than a fixed schedule: exact dates for seminars, workshops, and career events will be confirmed each term based on speaker availability and room bookings, and will be communicated to students at the start of each semester.