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## USSU Report to University Council

October 2022

Respected members of the University Council, the USSU had a great start to the year with everyone back on campus with beautiful fall colours across our campus. This month's Council report includes USSU advocacy priorities on the federal & provincial levels, events, and campaigns organized in September.

For updated information, videos and pictures, I encourage everyone to visit the USSU Instagram [ussuexec](#) and the [USSU website](#).

**National Day for Truth and Reconciliation-** “Remembering and honouring residential school survivors and their families.”

USSU supports the USask's *ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan* let's fly up together Indigenous Strategy and always looks forward to collaboration. During the week of Truth and Reconciliation, the USSU collaborated with the office of the Vice-Provost of Indigenous Engagement to screen [Home from School: The Children of Carlisle \(2021\)](#). The film follows the story of a delegation of Northern Arapaho tribal members who traveled from Wyoming to Pennsylvania in 2017 to retrieve the remains of three children who died at Carlisle Indian Industrial school in the 1880s. The film is a journey into the troubled history of Indian boarding schools and a quest to heal generational wounds. Additionally, USSU executives participated in various events across the campus during this week.

President Goswami also welcomed USSU Knowledge Keeper Joseph Naytowhow and Elder Sharon O'Keewehow to University Students' Council during the first USC meeting of the year. They shared their knowledge, and their stories with us. Joseph also helped the USC to understand the meaning of a land acknowledgment and its significance. With this guidance, the USSU wrote its land acknowledgment to reflect the truth and history of the land we are located.

*“The USSU acknowledges that we gather on treaty 6 territory, the homeland of the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Dakota people. We recognize the harm colonial institutions, such as the University of Saskatchewan, have done. We remember that there were centuries of governance and education on this land before the settlers arrived and that these forms of education and governance are continuing today. We honour and reaffirm our relationships with one another and the land we are on as we work to dismantle the systematic barriers to education that First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and other marginalized people face.”*

### **Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities**

USSU is an active member of the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU). President Abhineet Goswami and VP Operation and Finance Lia Storey-Gamble are the members representing the USSU in UCRU. UCRU is an informal coalition of student associations whose mandate is to advocate to the Canadian Federal Government for an affordable, inclusive and high-calibre undergraduate university education with opportunities for increased access to undergraduate research. We collectively represent over 225,000 university students across Canada. This year UCRU is putting forward four priorities to develop a federal lobbying campaign that will be conducted between November 24 to December 2 in Ottawa. All UCRU members are looking forward to meeting with Members of Parliament to support UCRU’s advocacy goals.

#### **Priorities:**

- 1. Financial Aid,**
- 2. Mental Health,**
- 3. Indigenous Student Education,**
- 4. and Employment**

We will bring forward the recommendations to the council in upcoming reports.

### **Student Union Development Summit (SUDS)**

USSU executives went to the Student Union Development Summit (SUDS), which is organized annually by the Alma Mater Society of the University of British Columbia. SUDS's mission is to share student leaders’ experiences, ideas, and best practices for running a successful student-oriented organization. This year's summit had great keynote speakers including, the Deputy Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs and the Honourable Wally Oppal. There were also sessions on Anti-Racist Approach to Media Literacy, Negotiations, Advocacy, Government Relations, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Campaign development and Culture of Violence & Resistance. The summit created a great platform for our executives to build a network and create discussions on various student issues. Through this summit, USSU executives are working with other student unions and associations to address

different issues, creating unique ways to enhance student engagement on campus. Additionally, this summit creates great collaborations among student leaders across the country.

## **Provincial Advocacy**

President Goswami is working to bring forward the student leaders of other student unions and associations across Saskatchewan to create a unified lobbying campaign. So far, he has met the President of First Nations University (Saskatoon and Regina Campus), University of Regina, and Saskatchewan Polytechnic (Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and Regina). This year student leaders are collaborating to advocate for student support and wellness across the province with the federal government.

USSU executives have met with Minister Wyant, Minister of Advance Education, Carla Beck, leader of the opposition, Aleana Young, Immigration and Career Training, Innovation Saskatchewan Critic, Vicki Mowat Health Critic, Jennifer Bowes Advance Education Critic. Through our meeting, we discussed the current challenges our students are facing on campus. We also discussed how the government can support students in mental health, better job opportunities and better wages in the province.

This year we are putting forward advocacy policies to help students and support our province's growth plan.

### **Priorities:**

- 1. Career Development**
- 2. Financial Support**
- 3. Student Wellness**

These three advocacy points are interconnected and ultimately support our student's future and our province's future. We will bring forward the recommendations on each lobby point in the following council report.

USSU executives also meet with Mayor Charlie Clark. During the meeting, we discussed the Student and the City of Saskatoon Connection Committee and how the city and students can collaborate on employment opportunities, mental health support and engagement. The USSU and the Mayor's office are also looking to collaborate on events.

## **Support for Students**

The USSU's mission is to support the undergraduates of USask through continuous collaboration, conversations, and advocacy. During the fall, the USSU heard many student concerns regarding student support and services. To address the concerns, USSU reached out to the Provost's office, the President's executive team, and the Vice-Provost TLSE to strengthen the pre-existing support. Delays in services in Student Central, academic advising, and the Finance office were the foremost concerns.

International Students were continuously facing challenges in visa processing through IRCC. But to support the international student USSU reached out to Minister Wyant's office, Minister of Advance Education, and requested they speak to the federal government regarding the issue. USSU also wrote a support letter to the federal government regarding this issue in collaboration with the UCRU. Through these continuous advocacy efforts, the USSU is looking to support our students.

## Events

The USSU organized many events throughout the campus to enhance the campus experience for students and increase student engagement.

- **Campus Group Week:** We held CGW from September 12th to 16th. USSU ratified Campus Groups tabled in the arts and science tunnel to showcase the diverse range of options available for students to engage with. There was also a campus group networking social in Louis' Loft, where we provided engagement and inter-group collaboration opportunities for our campus groups.
- **Academic Awareness Week-** We held our AAW from September 19 to 23rd. AAW is organized annually to raise awareness about their rights and responsibilities and help them learn about various academic resources available on campus. During the week, we provide students with an academic handbook highlighting the roles and responsibilities of different academic appeal committees. We also conducted our first-ever Deans fair, where students and the associate dean, dean, and academic advisors had the opportunity to engage with one another and ask questions about the academics.
- **Sexual Violence Awareness Week-** We held our SVA week from September 26th to September 29th. During the week the Women's Centre organized various events around sexual violence prevention. What is Sexual violence? With Morgan Price from Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre, Bystander

training with Nicole White, Flight, Flight or Free: HowtoUnlock the Stress Cycle, Self Defence Class, and Movie night.

- **Accessibility Week-** During the week of October 3rd to October 7th we held our Accessibility Week. We shared online resources regarding accessibility - Access and Equity Services, USSU Help Centre, USSSU Women's Centre, USSU Pride Centre, and other support and services across campus. We also welcomed therapy dogs in the Place Riel Student Centre.
- **De-Stress Scavenger Hunt-** Students are stressed throughout the year and the USSU will be offering destressing initiatives for students to help take a break from their hectic workload and relax. The USSU organized a scavenger hunt as an initiative for the De-Stress Events that will occur throughout our year.

### **University Students Council (USC)**

The University Students' Council (USC) started their meeting for the term on September 2nd, 2022. This year we had great speakers including President Stoicheff, who talked about leadership, the importance of leadership across our province and the USask, and how USC can contribute to the USask's leadership mission. President Stoicheff also shared his wisdom and stories about USask's leadership journey.

We also welcome Provost and Vice President Academics, Dr. Airini, and Deputy Provost Patti McDougall to facilitate a discussion with USC about academic success.

1. What are the top three "things" that support your academic success at university?
2. What can you do through your student leadership position this year to support the progress of the students you represent?
3. As a student, what can you foresee as bold ambitions for USask to become the university the world needs?
4. What can you do through your student leadership position this year to advance the five aspirations described within the University Plan?

Through these great discussions with USC, USSU and the Provost office were able to work on some action items.

USC also conducted the appointment of Student at Large (SAL) and Councillors on different committees. The USSU has 13 committees under USC that support the mission, vision and values of the USSU.

## **Association of Presidency of Constituency (AOCP)**

We had our second AOCP meeting, where we discussed a range of topics with our constituency presidents:

1. How to engage students around campus
2. Student well, student central, AES, Academic Advising and Finance Office support
3. Townhall to get the feedback of students across the colleges
4. Inter-college activities
5. Budget presentation to the Provost's Office
6. Provincial and federal Advocacy
7. Support letters

We also welcome Provost and Vice President Academics, Dr. Airini, and Deputy Provost Patti McDougall to facilitate a discussion with AOCP to talk about the priorities of the President's and the Provost's Office. And we also discuss how this discussion can make a budgetary impact.

## **USSU Fresh Market**

The USSU Food Centre offers a fresh food market in Place Riel, as a convenient option for students looking to grab healthy snacks or groceries. This program provides fresh fruit and vegetable options at extremely low prices to accommodate students' health needs.

You can find the Fresh Market set up on the main level of Place Riel, near the USSU, from Tuesday to Friday 10:30 am – 4:30 pm.

The Food Centre continues to run the uFood emergency hamper program for students. Students can order non-perishable goods online from our website for pick up at our office.

Sincere thank you from the USSU team. Kindly reach out to Abhineet Goswami at [president@ussu.ca](mailto:president@ussu.ca) or (306) 966-6965 for any questions or suggestions.

With respect,

Abhineet Goswami, President  
Sharon Jacob, VP Academic Affairs

Lia Storey-Gamble, VP Operations and Finance

Punya Miglani, VP Student Affairs