

Dear Acting Provost and Vice President Academic Dr. Bruni-Bossio,

I write this letter to you on behalf of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, representing all the University of Saskatchewan undergraduate students for the 2025-2026 USask Operating Budget.

In this report, you will find recommendations for a wide range of student priorities for the upcoming year. The recommendations in this report can be classified into two categories: college-specific and university-wide budget recommendations. Additionally, you will find that some of these recommendations pertain to the short-term needs of the student body, and some of them require long-term strategic planning to enhance the student life on campus.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, students at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) contributed approximately \$227.8 million in tuition, representing 17.4% of the university's total revenue. This emphasizes the need to incorporate student perspectives in the upcoming budget process. We respectfully request your consideration of the following areas for the budget:

1. Affordability
2. Empowerment
3. Campus Well-Being

Further information about the key areas mentioned above can be found on the following pages.

Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic for consistently considering the needs of students and addressing key priorities such as:

1. Food Insecurity on Campus
2. Queer Housing
3. Tuition Consultations
4. Safety and Accessibility Audits on Campus

In conclusion, I thank you and your team for the unwavering support you have provided to USask students time and again. Your contributions to enhancing student life experience exemplify USask's student-centric approach.

Yours Sincerely,



Krunal Chavda,

President - University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU)

Students are the heart and soul of our university. There cannot be a university without students. At the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU), we take pride in representing, serving and supporting the undergraduate student body of USask both academically and non-academically. We are committed to protecting and maintaining the quality and integrity of accessible public education. In order to make these students's university experience better, we propose the following recommendations for the 2025-2026 budget:

## **1. Affordability**

### **a. More Need-Based Scholarships and Bursaries**

Today, all of us are living through an affordability crisis. A recent survey done by TD Canada<sup>1</sup> shows that nearly half of Canadian students are unable to adequately cover basic needs such as food and housing. In such challenging times, we request that you increase the scholarships, bursaries and awards budget from \$58.5 million (2023-24) to \$62 million in the academic year 2025-2026. We also request that you increase the number of need-based scholarships and bursaries given to our international, Indigenous, and other marginalized students. Current geopolitical events coupled with affordability crises have made it difficult for our international students to manage their finances. Thus, we request that the USask administration support these students by providing them with dedicated bursaries specifically for students experiencing financial hardship.

### **b. Co-Op Internship Program Tuition Reassessment.**

Co-op internships are a great way for students to get practical work experience before graduating from our university. It not only helps them in their careers, but it also allows them to pay back their student loans and reduces financial burdens. Speaking with numerous students who have been a part of our co-op program through various colleges and who intend to be a part of that program, we have identified that co-op tuition fees are a significant barrier for most students aiming for co-op internships. A comparison of co-op tuition across three colleges can be found in the references page.<sup>4</sup>

We request that you reassess the co-op tuition across all the colleges offering co-op internship programs and recommend that we make a special tuition category for co-op internship program tuition at the university level and treat them as distance education programs so that all of our students can have better opportunities. We also recommend that for our international students, the co-op differential tuition multiplier be the same as the distance education multiplier of

1.5 times so that they can have a meaningful Canadian work experience that will help them in their future employment.

We also recommend that USask should strengthen its internal co-op programs by hiring and training more of its undergraduate students within USask and its affiliated institutions like GIFS, VIDO, CLS, GIWS, and CCNI.

**c. On-Campus Student Wages**

Students are not just an important part of university life in an academic sense, but many of them gain valuable experience as resident assistants, research assistants, and student assistants while still pursuing their undergraduate degrees.

The work experience they receive working on campus is invaluable. USask should increase campus wages for students working on campus to align with the U15 average of student wages.

These measures will support the Amplify value goal of Commitment 3, Inspired Communities of **UPlan-2025<sup>2</sup>** by amplifying contribution to GDP, job creation, and economic security in Saskatchewan and across Canada. They will also support the goal of embracing the interdisciplinarity of Commitment 1, Courageous Curiosity, by growth in training programs across colleges and schools.

## **2. Empowerment**

**a. Resources for Policy Navigation.**

The University of Saskatchewan (USask) takes pride in being a member of the U15 group of research-intensive universities. As students of USask, we are equally proud to be part of an institution that upholds such high standards of excellence in research, scholarly, and academic pursuits. A recent Academic report submitted to the university administration and senior leadership team by the USSU highlights the importance of having a policy navigation office on campus to support students in navigating academic and non-academic policies and procedures. An investment should be made in this area to ensure we provide the same support and services to our students as the other U15 universities.

**b. Enhanced Student Services**

Campus life experience is greatly impacted by the quality and availability of various services on campus, including academic advising, student wellness services, and student finance services to name a few. While interacting with students, we have identified the lack of quality and availability of these services, which, when they need them, has impacted their campus experience negatively.

We recommend that an increase in the quality and availability of necessary services such as student finance, student central, academic advising, and student wellness be made. These services are essential in promoting student success on campus.

The above-mentioned recommendations fulfill Commitment 2 of Boundless Collaboration of **UPlan-2025** by aligning structures as systems and contributing to building the culture of trust essential to collaboration.

### **3. Campus Well-Being**

#### **a. Improved Safety and Accessibility on Campus**

The USask Saskatoon campus is widespread across 2425 acres, and while we understand that it is very complex to monitor all of the campus, we request that certain measures be taken to address the safety, security, and accessibility issues still present on our campus. We recommend that improvements be made in campus lighting, particularly along pathways from Cumberland Avenue to the College Quarter near the Stadium Parkade area and between the Engineering Building and Administration Building, to name a few. A complete outdoor lighting review should be conducted to ensure students' safety on campus.

The USSU requests an increase in the number of Protective Services personnel on campus, as the number of safety concerns experienced by students has increased dramatically.

We also recommend that the USask administration work with the City of Prince Albert to enhance the safety and security of students studying on the PA Campus as they face significant challenges regarding their safety.

We thank you for your continued support in promoting accessibility and for the many challenges our campus provides. But more needs to be done. We recommend that a yearly audit be done for accessibility on campus for both Saskatoon and Prince Albert, in residence and in areas such as Stadium Parkade and Griffiths Stadium.

#### **b. Increased Study Spaces**

Our enrollments grew by more than 2% in 2023-2024, amounting to 26,700 students. With the significant increase in the number of students studying on campus, the number of free study spaces on campus is very limited. Students are increasingly complaining about how hard it is to find a calm or collaborative study space at times, especially during exam season. An audit should be done for all the available study spaces on campus, and an investment should be made to

increase the number of study spaces on campus. This will enable students to come together in collaborative spaces, which will increase engagement among peers. The calm spaces will help students focus better, enhancing their academic performance.

**c. Indigenous Housing**

As Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said, “Reconciliation is about forgoing and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts”. Universities are the best places for building respectful relationships. To build those relationships, we must recognize the needs of our Indigenous students, specifically their housing needs. We recommend establishing a dedicated Indigenous housing program where our Indigenous students feel at home with their peers. We should take the example of McGill University’s First People’s House.

The above-mentioned recommendation of establishing Indigenous housing directly supports the goal of uplifting Indigenization of commitment 1 to courageous curiosity through the growth of programs that support our Indigenous students. Recommendations a,b, and c of part 3 also support the goals of aligning structures, Emboldening Partnerships, and Experiencing Reconciliation of Commitment 2, Boundless Collaboration.

**Conclusion**

The University of Saskatchewan Students’ Union is eternally grateful for this opportunity to provide important input for the University of Saskatchewan Budget for the academic year 2025-2026. We have tried to be both detailed and specific in our attempt to provide valuable recommendations as the student body of this university. We hope that these recommendations aligned with the strategic priorities of the USask through UPlan-2025 will advance the university towards the common goal of being the “University that the World Needs.”

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Yours sincerely,



Krunal Chavda

President - University of Saskatchewan Students’ Union

References:

1. TD Canada Survey -  
<https://td.mediaroom.com/2024-08-27-Nearly-half-of-Canadian-students-are-unable-to-a-dequately-cover-basic-needs-such-as-food-and-housing,-TD-Survey>
2. UPlan 2025  
<https://plan.usask.ca/>
3. Annual Report USask  
[https://leadership.usask.ca/documents/administration/annual\\_report\\_2023-24.pdf](https://leadership.usask.ca/documents/administration/annual_report_2023-24.pdf)
4. Co-op tuition fees comparison of engineering, computer science and Edwards.

<b>Engineering Co-op Internship Program Tuition - Per Course</b>						
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		change ( from 2022-23 to 2024-25)	% change (2022-23 to 2024-25)
Base Tuition	\$1,112.80	\$1,235.21		\$1,296.97	\$184.17	16.55014378
Differential	3.6	4.2		4.84	1.24	34.44444444
International Co-op tuition	\$4,006.08	\$5,187.88		\$6,277.33	\$2,271.25	56.69519331
<b>Computer Science Co-op Internship Program Tuition - Per Course</b>						
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		change ( from 2022-23 to 2024-25)	% change (2022-23 to 2024-25)
Base Tuition	\$796.50	\$844.20		\$894.90	\$98.40	12.35404896
Differential	3.6	4.2		4.84	1.24	34.44444444
International Co-op tuition	\$2,867.40	\$3,545.64		\$4,331.32	\$1,463.92	51.05377694
<b>Edwards Co-op Internship Program Tuition - Per Course</b>						
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25		change ( from 2023-24 to 2024-25)	% change (2023-24 to 2024-25)
Base Tuition		\$953.10		\$1,000.80	\$47.70	5.004721435
Differential		4.2		4.84	0.64	15.23809524
International Co-op tuition		\$4,003.02		\$4,843.87	\$840.85	21.00544089

NOTE - Edwards co-op internship program 2022-23 tuition is not considered here as the program went through some major credit hours changes