



COUNCIL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2025

Although September is a time here at the University of Saskatchewan when we welcome many students back to campus, as well as thousands of students for the very first time, September is first and foremost a month where we are called upon to actively remember and engage in Truth and Reconciliation. We look to our Elders and Wise Ones to learn about Truth, and as non-Indigenous Peoples, it is our responsibility to continue to work and actively undertake commitments to Reconciliation. Education and community are two powerful tools necessary to continue to learn about colonialism and the importance of Indigenous achievement, agency, Indigenization, and decolonization. Following the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the USSU will be hosting an Indigenous Makers Market in the Arts Tunnel from October 1-3 to highlight just some of the many unique and beautiful creations made by Indigenous folks in our community. Remembering and honouring Truth and Reconciliation is not just a one-day initiative; it is our responsibility to continue actively engaging in this work every day.

In September, the USSU welcomed USask Students back to campus through an array of Welcome Week festivities, from tabling opportunities to learn about campus supports, student clubs, and USask resources, to a movie night in the Bowl, as well as through activities like speed friending. All of these activities were intended to help students meet new people and find community. Based on feedback from students and by the sheer number of student survival calendars handed out, a student-friendly resource to all things campus-life, the USSU believes that Welcome Week 2025 was a success! The week finished off with energy, fireworks, and stadium lights at the annual Homecoming Huskie Football Game, where students past and present packed the stands to support our Huskie Athletes. Demonstrating the strong connection that students have to USask and to campus, the community inevitably remains a powerful force.

Throughout July and August, the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union continued to meet, collaborate, and organize for student support and success. Over the course of the summer, our team also focused on event planning and organizing Campus Group supports and resources to enhance student engagement. We gathered with various stakeholders of student life and processes, such as Mayor Block's Chief of Staff, several Deans, and Vice-Dean Academics, the Minister and Shadow Minister of Advanced Education, as well as members of the University Community who work to foster student engagement. Additionally, the USSU and USSU Pride Centre offered interviews and statements regarding the implications of Bill 137 on students and the future of the kinds of education and spaces created in classrooms across educational levels. Furthermore, the USSU and USSU Women's Centre have been working collaboratively with Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre to make accessible various supports and educational resources available to students in hopes of proactively responding to a culture that continues to enable sexual and gender-based violence here on campus. On Monday, September 22 at 5:00 pm, the USSU hosted a presentation by SSAIC titled "Redefining Consent: Leadership, Allyship, and Campus Safety." This talk was intended to provide staff and faculty of

the university with additional tools for demonstrating allyship from a leadership standpoint and creating a safe environment on campus that does not tolerate sexual and gender-based violence. The USSU intends to be clear that any form of hate, oppression, and violence, whether perpetrated through racism, ableism, transphobia and queerphobia, misogyny, or otherwise, will not be tolerated in the eyes of students here at the University of Saskatchewan.

In August, the USSU executive team travelled to Vancouver to meet with University student executive teams across Canada. Here, we shared insight, engaged in problem solving, heard from various leaders, innovators, builders, and advocates, and had opportunities to develop our skills within our respective portfolios. It was a powerful experience to meet like minded individuals and committed student leaders across the country.

At the beginning of September, our University Students' Council reconvened for the year. Every year, we welcome up to 26 Members of Student Council (MSC) composed of students from various colleges. Additionally, this year we also hope to welcome an MSC from Prince Albert Campus, which would be the first time we have had student representation on council from PA students. We are grateful for the opportunity to meet with so many student leaders across campus and beyond as we explore issues, priorities, and various levels of student affairs for the year ahead.

On behalf of the USSU and University of Saskatchewan students, we are grateful to share with the University Council our priorities, initiatives, and reflections.



President

Students continue to be among the most active and engaged advocates, collaborators, and community builders, strengthening their commitments to holistic and intersectional approaches for equity, diversity, inclusion, justice, and belonging. Driving meaningful and student-led change, increasing Indigenous students' autonomy and opportunities to foster various initiatives to strengthen community for Indigenous Students on campus is important to ongoing commitments to reconciliation and engagement for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Over the summer, I have been in regular communication with the Indigenous Students' Union to collaboratively develop a pathway forward. Remaining in regular contact with Dr. Angela Jaime and her team from the Office of the Vice Provost for Indigenous Engagement, as well as with staff from Gordon Oakes Red Bear Students' Centre, I am grateful for collaborative dialogue and support. The USSU will continue to work towards supporting student commitments to Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous achievement, as well as advocating for opportunities that increase agency for Indigenous students and provide educational spaces for all students to learn about the significance of Indigenization and decolonization across USask.

The cost of tuition remains a front of mind concern for students. In June, the USSU met with the Minister for Advanced Education to discuss our priorities as they relate to the Minister's portfolio. In addition to calling for predictable tuition frameworks and the removal of interest from Student Loans, the USSU is also committed to supporting various wrap-around mechanisms to aid in tackling the student affordability crisis. It is necessary that students are aware of the evolving landscapes that frequently inform the cost of tuition in order for university spaces to remain accessible and affordable to all students. Diversity of student perspectives is extremely valuable and essential to continuing to be the kind of university that produces world-class thinkers, innovators, community collaborators, and researchers.

Additionally, the USSU is aware that tuition is not the only uncertainty in the lives of many students. Presently, I am collecting insight from other U15 University Student Unions on their knowledge of student wages and approaches to undergraduate student employment. This information will result in the culmination of a report on student wages and will be supported by a student wages forum hosted by the USSU on October 1st entitled *Pay it Forward*. The intention of this engagement with students is to learn more about how undergraduate student wages are impacting students and the various experiences students have had in understanding and navigating undergraduate student wages. The USSU is interested in exploring the possibilities of developing a more comprehensive and transparent matrix or explanation of qualifiers for determining undergraduate student wages and the ways in which undergraduate student wages are anticipated to change within the course of a student's time as an employee, and are potentially different across various departments and faculties. In defining this salary band change, this will support undergraduate employees' awareness of their compensation and support

more accurate predictions and planning of student budgets. This is particularly timely, as the minimum wage in the Province of Saskatchewan will change on October 1st from \$15.00 to \$15.35. Inevitably, gathering USask undergraduate student employees to learn more about their experiences will ensure that the USSU is aware of various ways in which students are navigating the university community to ensure that they are supported.

Amplifying the work of the USSU Food Centre, which delivers thousands of hampers to all USask students, the USSU has also begun to have conversations with Prince Albert Campus regarding food insecurity and ways in which students who are food precarious can be supported through a more robust hamper or gift card system. The USSU continues to meet with leaders from the Prince Albert Campus to foster a greater connection and relationship, encouraging cross-campus student engagement. This includes connecting with Prince Albert Campus Peer Health Program and student leaders. Supporting greater engagement and connection to Prince Albert Campus students is important as it strengthens the diversity of our student community and communication. In addition to cross-campus engagement regarding increased dialogue with Prince Albert Campus, the USSU is also working to reignite our Association of Constituency Presidents. This working group provides a forum in which student college and constituency presidents from across the USask community can come together to share insights and solve various student issues. Providing many ways for students to connect across disciplines and faculties is important to the USSU, as this increases the strength of our student community and knowledge of student supports and priorities.

Topics of community orientated and integrated engagements with Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) continue to be top of mind. I have been working closely with Dr. Patti McDougal and Dr. Vince Bruni-Bossio to discuss various ways in which more active frameworks of EDI can be strategically explored for students. These conversations have been impactful and support positive directions forward. Revitalizing the scope of the EDI Framework to reflect the complex and important landscapes that students are currently facing would best support opportunities to make meaningful strides in advancing shared knowledge and values about the importance of student awareness of advancements in community engagement. Supporting the development of a framework of shared values, the USSU recognizes the importance of bringing together all students to help advance EDI commitments at the University of Saskatchewan. The USSU will continue to meet with senior leadership to advance these priorities. Additionally, the USSU is supporting the planning and programming of an Anti-Racism Symposium that will take place on November 19, 2025. It is our hope that this initiative will support a space for deeper discussions regarding pathways forward for students to work to dismantle institutional barriers.

Over the summer, the USSU worked to engage in deeper conversations of sexual violence awareness and prevention across campus. Both Emily Hubick, VP Student Affairs and I, as well as Alandra Flynn-James, USSU Women's Centre Coordinator, have connected with

Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre (SSAIC) to discuss various opportunities for educational and community initiatives. Specifically, Morgan Price, Educational and Outreach Coordinator for SSAIC, and I have been working on a collaborative initiative to support student volunteer experiences and community engagement regarding sexual and gender-based violence. We recently launched Demanding Change, Uniting Community, a collaborative pilot project and coalition against sexual and gender-based violence. Applications closed on September 18th, 2025, and our first meeting with students will take place on September 29th, 2025. Demanding Change, Uniting Community is a two-term, community-based initiative led by SSAIC and the USSU through a Coalition Against Sexual Violence.

This collaborative project brings together students, community members, and campus leaders to address sexual and gender-based violence through advocacy, education, action, and community outreach. In the Fall Term, participants will volunteer directly with SSAIC to learn and support community outreach initiatives around Saskatoon. This may include attending presentations, information fairs, and community outreach activities that support SSAIC. Students will learn about sexualized violence, child sexual abuse, consent education, trauma-informed care, and how to teach about sexualized violence. Throughout the term, there will be checkpoints with the USSU's advocacy committee to report on both experiences and insights. In the Winter Term, volunteers will work alongside the USSU and SSAIC to develop and present recommendations to the USSU Advocacy Committee based on community outreach initiatives on campus and through meetings with student groups and individuals. This work is aimed at strengthening sexual violence prevention and response on campus. Additionally, it is the intent of this term for students to be able to focus on cultivating staff and faculty awareness and commitment to advancing conversations that bring attention to sexual and gender-based violence prevention on campus. By applying the insights gained in the fall, students will be better equipped to tackle university issues and landscapes of sexual violence awareness. This project is a volunteer position that will support community engagement as well as the creation of a recommendations report discussing the experiences had in both the community and campus environment, and suggestions for framing a campus response to sexual and gender-based violence that is also accountable to the intersections of our Saskatoon community. Ultimately, supporting student advocacy through an intersectional and community-oriented framework will remain a priority throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,



Emma Wintermute

President

University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

Vice-President Operations & Finance

Campus Groups

Throughout the summer months, I was very busy with the burgeoning activity of our campus groups. Much of my work was dedicated to reviewing ratification applications. By the end of summer, and our entry into Welcome Week, the USSU had ratified just over sixty campus groups. As of mid-September, there are over ninety fully ratified groups, with many more pending review.

Additionally, the USSU is proud to have approved over \$6,000 in grants for our campus groups. We've provided funds for EDI projects, grad celebrations, charity events, and more. Through our businesses, XL Print & Design and Louis', we've aided campus groups in building communities and encouraging students to pursue extracurricular activities. These sponsorships, in support of group projects, initiatives, and events, are a cornerstone of the services we offer to our members. We look forward to supporting groups throughout the academic year as students work tirelessly to build a strong, connected campus.

You can find a full list of ratified groups on our [USSUHub](#) system. I encourage you to view this list to get acquainted with the creativity, school spirit, and dedication of our members, as well as to seek potential partnerships and collaborations with the students we're all here to help succeed.

Transit

Part of my role is to liaise with Saskatoon Transit to ensure that student concerns are addressed by the City when bus routes are updated or redesigned. I am happy to report that, over the summer, I met with the Transit Services Team to discuss updates to several routes across the city, and particularly entering our main campus.

Transit has been working hard to procure more buses, adjust routes to increase frequency, and gather feedback from riders. The overwhelming majority of respondents to a recent student survey on bus routes expressed support for updates to routes 4, 10, 16, 17, and the 40s, all of which serve the area around campus. These routes run at increased frequency, with articulated buses and longer service hours.

With construction on the Link system approaching, I will continue to meet with Saskatoon Transit to discuss how changes will affect our campus community.

USSU Policies

With increased time on my hands, I completed numerous updates to USSU policies during the summer. These changes, focused primarily on financial and campus group policies, aim to enhance the USSU's transparency efforts, ensuring that our members feel represented and that we are held accountable. The changes also removed redundancies and outdated practices from the processes of campus groups, simplifying the ratification and funding processes.

These updates addressed the following policies:

- Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Funding Policy
- Association of Constituency Presidents Policy
- Executive Protocol Policy
- Executive Sponsorship Policy
- Process for Approval Policy
- Campus Groups Administration Policy
- Campus Groups Conduct Policy
- Campus Groups Grants Policy
- Campus Groups Insurance Policy
- Campus Groups Operations Policy
- Investment Policy
- Space Booking Rental Policy

Respectfully submitted,



Owen Deis

Vice-President (Operations & Finance)

University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

Vice-President Academic Affairs

The summer months of my term as Vice-President Academic Affairs were defined by steady progress on academic policy, student advocacy, and relationship-building across the university and beyond. These three months provided both the space to advance long-term projects and the urgency to prepare for the academic year ahead. Now, with the fall term underway, I am reminded of why this work matters most: the return of students has transformed our campus with energy, ambition, and renewed commitment to learning. Throughout this period, my central aim has been to ensure that student voices remain at the heart of decision-making while advancing principled changes that strengthen transparency, consistency, and equity across the institution.

One of the most consistent features of my portfolio is direct student advocacy. Across July, August, and September, I worked with a significant number of students, the majority through appeals processes related to promotion, academic standing, or Required to Discontinue (RTD) cases. These appeals revealed familiar challenges: difficulty navigating policy, confusion around procedures, and lack of awareness of available supports. Too often, students approach these processes at moments of crisis, when timelines are short and stakes are high. My goal has been to shift this dynamic, orienting students toward resources earlier and ensuring that lines of communication with colleges remain open and responsive.

The cumulative insights from these cases demonstrate how appeals sit at the intersection of policy, pedagogy, and people. Delays in decisions leave students uncertain about finances, housing, or future plans. Inconsistencies in sanctions across colleges undermine perceptions of fairness. And policies written in inaccessible language can leave students feeling alienated from the very systems meant to support them. Each individual case is meaningful in its own right, but taken together, they point to the systemic reforms I have been pursuing in hearings, sanctions, and assessments.

The work to establish a more efficient and fair academic hearing system has matured considerably over the summer. The objective is structural efficiency, procedural fairness, and clarity at every stage. Work is being done to advance a system that provides students with clearer pathways and reduces the inconsistencies that currently exist between colleges.

In parallel, conversations regarding sanctions have advanced. It is evident that outcomes for similar offences can differ markedly depending on the college, the composition of a hearing board, or the interpretation of aggravating and mitigating factors. This variability undermines confidence in academic integrity systems and contributes to student distrust. International students are particularly vulnerable, as sanctions such as suspension can carry disproportionate consequences for their immigration status.

The culture of assessment has been another area of sustained focus. Students consistently describe uncertainty in grading criteria, limited feedback, and reliance on high-stakes exams that often test recall rather than understanding. These practices invite misconduct while failing to capture deeper learning. Over the summer, I engaged faculty and staff in discussions about assessment practices that emphasize transparency, constructive feedback, and alignment with outcomes.

This work is also attentive to inclusivity. Neurodivergent students, international students, and those facing structural barriers often find that rigid or opaque assessment practices create disproportionate obstacles. By encouraging assessment that values growth, applied knowledge, and clarity, we can build systems that uphold rigour while supporting diverse learners.

Policy only serves students if it is understandable. Throughout the summer, I focused on translating complex regulations into student-facing resources that are clear, accessible, and respectful of students. This includes new materials clarifying acceptable use of digital tools, such as grammar tools and generative AI. The goal is not to police or promote these tools, but to provide clarity: what is permitted, what requires instructor guidance, and what constitutes misconduct.

Complementing this, the revised USSU Academic Handbook was completed and distributed over the summer. It is already proving to be a valuable navigational aid, providing students with direct access to information on policies, appeals, and support. I continue to track feedback on its use to refine future editions.

The summer also saw the formalization of the Academic Integrity Forum, a university-wide body co-chaired with Susan Bens. After months of preparatory work on composition and scope, the Forum held its inaugural meeting in September. Its agenda connects the tiered hearing system, sanctions guide, and emerging issues around AI and assessment design. The Forum's importance lies in its mission and method. It convenes student advocates, governance staff, and Associate Deans Academic to move beyond siloed responses and toward shared standards. It is a space to address immediate concerns, but equally to think upstream about how incentives, workloads, and course design can either foster or undermine integrity.

Expanding and promoting undergraduate research has been one of my major priorities. Across the summer, I engaged faculty to map current practices and identify barriers. Research opportunities remain too dependent on informal networks: students with strong connections to faculty or graduate mentors often succeed, while others, equally capable, struggle to access opportunities. Supervisors, meanwhile, face significant barriers in time, recognition, and funding.

Two frameworks are guiding my approach. The first is strengthening graduate-undergraduate mentorship, with clear expectations and recognition for both parties. The second is embedding inquiry-driven research into courses, so that students experience research as part of their academic journey rather than only through extracurricular programs or grants. Both approaches expand access and normalize research as a core element of learning.

In August, I had the privilege of delivering remarks at the SURE Undergraduate Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Works (uRSAW) Symposium. This event showcased the creativity and dedication of students across disciplines. My remarks emphasized the transformative potential of undergraduate research, not only for individual development but for the culture of inquiry at USask. Seeing the enthusiasm of students and the quality of their work reaffirmed why this area of advocacy is so essential.

Another initiative that has gained momentum is the promotion of Open Educational Resources (OERs). Rising textbook costs remain a barrier to accessibility, and OERs provide a sustainable alternative that supports both affordability and pedagogical innovation. Over the summer, I engaged with faculty and library staff to explore how adoption can be expanded, and I will continue to advocate for institutional support to incentivize faculty adoption and development of OERs.

Across all areas of my work, equity remains a guiding principle. Conversations with colleagues in the Gwenna Moss Centre and elsewhere have underscored how inclusive design, respectful communication, and flexible assessment benefit not only marginalized students but the entire learning community. Small but intentional changes, such as clearer rubrics, respectful pronoun use, and inclusive course outlines, create classrooms where students feel valued and capable of success.

I have also maintained dialogue with the Office of the Vice Provost for Indigenous Engagement, as well as the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, to ensure that academic initiatives align with broader commitments to Indigenization and reconciliation. Supporting Indigenous students' autonomy and opportunities within academic structures is essential, and I remain committed to advancing that work.

In addition to internal policy and advocacy, the USSU executive engaged externally on behalf of students. This included meetings with both the Minister of Advanced Education, the Honourable Ken Cheveldayoff, and the Shadow Minister of Advanced Education, Dr. Tajinder Grewal. These meetings provided valuable opportunities to highlight student concerns around financial aid, affordability, access to education, and the potential impacts of federal policies on international students.

By engaging with both government and opposition, the USSU ensures that student priorities are heard across the political spectrum. This bipartisan approach strengthens the credibility of our advocacy and underscores that support for students is not—and should not be—a partisan issue.

Looking ahead, preparations are underway for this year's Teaching Excellence Awards. These awards celebrate the dedication of faculty who model inclusive, transparent, and inspiring pedagogy. Recognizing teaching excellence is not symbolic alone; it sets a standard for the institution and highlights practices that align with our collective vision for student success.

The return of students in September has reaffirmed the importance of this work. Systems exist to serve students, and their effectiveness is measured by whether they empower students to learn, grow, and succeed.

July through September has been a season of both preparation and renewal. The groundwork laid over the summer is now translating into tangible benefits as the year begins. I am grateful for the collaboration of faculty, staff, administrators, and, above all, students, whose commitment to learning continues to inspire and guide this work.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Norah Jacob". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Norah" and last name "Jacob" clearly distinguishable.

Norah Jacob
Vice-President (Academic Affairs)
University of Saskatchewan Students' Union