

Room 110, 1 Campus Drive
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 5A3



Telephone: (306) 966-6960
Email: contactus@ussu.ca
Website: www.ussu.ca

**University Students' Council Minutes
October 1, 2026– 6:00 PM
Roy Romanow Student Council Chamber**

Present:

- **Abtin Safaein:** President
- **Elmer Vincent:** VP Operations and Finance
- **Ashley Mendez Rosales:** VP Academic Affairs
- **Azul Gonzalez Avila:** VP Student Affairs
- **Raelynne Boutin:** Agriculture and Bioresources
- **Cody Wilson:** Agriculture and Bioresources
- **Arbe Chumala:** Arts and Science
- **Sam Wardell:** Arts and Science
- **Gracie Radke:** Education
- **Parthi Shah:** Edwards School of Business
- **Shubham Jiaswal:** International Students
- **Max Clark:** Kinesiology
- **Melissa Vogler:** Law
- **Mitia Robinson:** Prince Albert Campus
- **Jordie Finnie:** St. Thomas More
- **Isfar Chowdhury:** Medicine
- **Ayodele Daniel Omotoso:** Engineering

Also Present:

- **Selim Bytyqi:** Chair
- **Amanda Mitchell:** Financial Controller
- **Atharv Govardhan:** Academic and Governance Assistant

Absent:

- **Samuel Janzen:** Nursing
- **Chinwe Udenze:** Pharmacy and Nutrition
- **Nyasha Alicia Munzara:** International Students
- **Chang Ge:** Dentistry
- **Sakina Abedi:** Edwards School of Business
- **Nate Desjarlais:** Indigenous Students
- **Laiba Masood:** St. Thomas More

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Land Acknowledgement

Chairperson Bytyqi stated the [Land Acknowledgement](#)

3. Roll Call & Quorum

Roll call was completed, and the list of attendees is listed on the first page of these minutes. Quorum was present

4. Adoption of an Agenda

Move to adopt the agenda as presented.

USC014	Councillor Finnie/ President Safaeian	Carried
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5. Minutes and Reports for Information

5.1 USC Meeting minutes –

Motion to adopt the USC meeting minutes-

USC015	Councillor Finnie/ Councillor Omotoso	Carried
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5.2 Executive Committee Minutes & Report –

President Safaeian:

Student Engagement and Huskies Athletics

The President met with Riley Cozart and Shannon Chinn and their discussions focused on increasing student engagement and attendance at Huskies sporting events. The executive team recognized that athletic events can contribute to student social life, help students meet others, and strengthen campus community.

A proposal was raised to establish a working group or committee to generate ideas for improving student participation and event attendance.

Audit and Finance

The President attended an Audit and Finance Committee meeting associated with the university's Board of Governors.

Endowment Fund

The President also met with Alexander Golovko, Vice-President of Partnerships and Development at Carleton University, to discuss the potential benefits of establishing a university endowment fund.

The example discussed involved transferring \$100,000 from operational funding and obtaining an additional \$100,000 in donor contributions, resulting in a \$200,000 endowment. At an illustrative annual return of approximately 5%, the fund could generate income to support student bursaries and scholarships. The President noted that the Carleton example had reportedly grown substantially over time.

The discussion introduced the possibility of exploring a similar long-term funding model to support students financially.

Operational Projects and Outreach

The President reported that work was continuing on AOCP. Technical difficulties with email systems were being addressed with the IT manager.

Additional work included student outreach and marketing, producing a promotional video, expanding USSU discount partnerships, and supporting website development.

The President acknowledged the work being done to establish the website and improve communication with students.

VP Vincent:

The Vice-President reported on several university and USSU responsibilities, including:

- Attending a meeting with KPMG and signing documents connected with matters expected to be discussed at the Annual General Meeting in November.
- Attending the university's Planning and Priorities Committee meeting.
- Participating in the Student Wellness Centre's annual start-of-year meeting alongside the President.
- Attending University Council and USSU meetings.
- Supporting Campus Groups Week, which included workshops and a social event that attracted substantial student participation.
- Continuing work on the YouSave website, with a launch anticipated for early the following week.

The Vice-President also described efforts to attend campus group events and support student organizations during Campus Groups Week.

VP Mendez Rosales:

The Vice-President of Academic Affairs reported on a meeting with Nancy Turner, the Interim Associate Provost, Teaching Innovation and Strategic Initiatives, to discuss annual goals, potential support, and opportunities for collaboration.

The Vice-President also handled student cases through calls and meetings and attended a fundraising event at City Hall for residential school survivors.

Participation in Campus Groups Week was also noted.

VP Gonzalez Avila:

The Vice-President of Student Affairs reported on the following activities:

- Attending the Child Care Centre's Annual General Meeting.
- Following up with the Sustainability Office, the PEP, and ISAC regarding future events and collaboration.
- Supporting a two-day community quilting workshop organized in collaboration with the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, the Indigenous Students' Union, and the Office of the Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement.
- Participating in Take Back the Night, which was described as successful.

Motion to adopt the USC Executive Committee Minutes & Report

USC016	Councillor Wilson/ Councillor Shah	Carried
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6. College/Constituency Reports

6.1 Agriculture and Bioresources:

Councillor Wilson presented:

- Additional lunch-and-learn sessions featuring industry experts were planned.
- Approximately 40 students were expected to participate in the CIBC Run for the Cure on the upcoming Sunday, although the councillor noted that the attendance estimate had not been confirmed.

6.2 Arts and Science

Councillor Wardell presented:

- Elections for the third member of the student council were underway.

- The elections were expected to conclude the following day.
- The Arts and Science MSC was expected to attend the next USSU meeting.
- Additional events were planned for the following week.

6.3 Dentistry

Councillor not present

6.4 Education

Councillor Radke had nothing to present

6.5 Edwards School of Business

Councillor Shah presented:

- The Thrift Crawl and pickleball tournament took place the previous week.
- The Edwards formal was scheduled for the evening of the meeting at Kīrō Park, and a councillor was unable to attend because of the event.
- Mock interviews were scheduled for the following day.
- A Career Closet initiative was planned for the next week.

6.6 Engineering

Councillor Omotoso presented:

- The councillor had communicated with the president of the engineering student society and was arranging further discussions. A meeting with the society's president was expected later that week.
- The councillor emphasized that student representation should be grounded in feedback from engineering students, not assumptions about what they need.

Preliminary student survey

- The councillor had created an initial survey to gather opinions about potential improvements to the engineering building and student facilities.
- The councillor cautioned that the results were preliminary and not yet fully representative of engineering students. Some responses might have come from students outside the intended constituency, limiting the reliability of the findings.
- The survey was intended to identify initial priorities, not to establish final decisions about which improvements should be pursued.
- Plans to improve the survey

- The councillor planned to revise the SurveyMonkey questionnaire to collect information about respondents' faculties and academic years. This would help verify that responses came from the intended student population and make it easier to compare feedback across student groups.

Classroom outreach

- A civil engineering professor had permitted the councillor to speak to second-year students during a class on the following Monday at 8:30 a.m. The councillor planned to explain the survey and encourage students to complete it.
- Outreach to first-year students was also anticipated for the following week.

- Chair Bytyqi asked whether the survey had been created by the councillor.

The councillor confirmed that it had been created personally and explained that approval from the relevant engineering student society president was required before proceeding with proposed initiatives.

- The Chair welcomed the consultation effort and expressed interest in hearing updated results in subsequent meetings.
- Follow-up actions:
 - Revise the survey to verify respondents' faculty and year of study.
 - Conduct classroom outreach to increase participation.
 - Gather more representative feedback before proposing changes.
 - Provide an updated report at a future meeting.

6.7 Indigenous Students

Councillor not present

6.8 International Students

Councillor Jaiswal had nothing to present

6.9 Kinesiology

Councillor Clark presented:

- Planning to have therapy dogs in early November
- Beach volleyball hosted on September 29 was very successful
- Study nights for Kin 121 and 122 were to be hosted very soon

6.10 Law

Councillor Vogler presented:

- A volleyball tournament was planned for the upcoming weekend.
- The constituency had elected its chair for the elections council.

6.11 Medicine

Councillor Chowdhury presented:

- The constituency had conducted elections for positions associated with the Society Council for Junior Physicians. Newly elected first-year representatives would learn from senior students to prepare for future leadership responsibilities.
- The constituency had organized its annual AgroMiles for Smiles run two weeks earlier. The event raised \$5,000 for an Alzheimer's-related cause.
- The annual fall formal had also taken place during the preceding weekend. The event included awards and scholarships and was reported to have attracted strong attendance.

6.12 Nursing

No Councillor present

6.13 Pharmacy and Nutrition

No Councillor present

6.14 Prince Albert

Councillor Robinson had nothing to present

6.15 St. Thomas More

Councillor Finnie presented:

- The constituency had discussed elections and confirmed that its members had been elected.
- A paint-your-tote-bag event was planned for the following Thursday, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Promotional posters had been placed in the Arts Building, around the relevant student association area, and in the tunnel. Additional posters still needed to be placed around St. Thomas More College.
- The councillor planned to attend the event between 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. and encouraged students, particularly Arts students, to participate.
- A peer-health event was also being planned in collaboration with the STM peer-mentor program. More information would be shared at the next meeting.

6.16 Western College of Veterinary Medicine

No Councillor present

7. Business

Motion to enter informality:

USC017	Councillor Finnie/ Councillor Clark	Carried
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The Chair explained that the purpose of the session was to assign councillors to USSU committees so that committees could begin their work.

The following process was established:

1. Each committee would be introduced, including its mandate, chair, meeting frequency, and number of councillor positions.
2. Councillors could nominate themselves or nominate other councillors.
3. Members nominated by others could accept or decline the nomination.
4. If nominations exceeded the available councillor positions, an election would be held.
5. If the number of nominees did not exceed the available positions, the nominees could be appointed without a contested vote.

The Chair emphasized that councillors were generally expected to join one or two committees. The priority was to ensure that every councillor served on at least one committee before anyone took on a second.

This approach was intended to distribute the workload fairly, prevent a small number of councillors from carrying too many responsibilities, and ensure broad participation in student governance.

Most committees were expected to meet approximately every three weeks, with additional meetings as required. The Campus Group Committee was identified as meeting weekly.

The Chair also noted that some committees, such as the Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Committee and the Elections Committee, would meet only when circumstances required them to do so.

Committee mandates presented

The following committees were introduced during the meeting.

Academic Relations Committee

Chair: Vice-President of Academic Affairs · Three councillors

Responsible for determining USSU academic policy and monitoring academic concerns at the university level. The committee also works on planning and delivering the Excellence Awards and symposium. Meetings occur every three weeks, or more frequently if required.

Advocacy Committee

Chair: President · Three councillors

Advocates for students on academic and non-academic matters. The committee identifies student concerns and develops strategies to address them. Meetings occur every three weeks, or more frequently if needed.

Campus Group Committee

Chair: Vice-President of Operations and Finance · Three councillors

Works with campus groups on communications, funding, ratification, and related administrative matters. The committee meets weekly for approximately one hour.

Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Committee

Chair: USSU Chair · Three councillors

Addresses alleged violations of USSU bylaws, policies, or behavioural standards by executives, councillors, or committee members. The Chair emphasized that this committee meets only when necessary and may not meet at all in some years. Members were encouraged to treat it as a secondary committee where possible.

Elections Committee

Chair: Chief Returning Officer, the Assistant Chief Returning Officer; traditionally the Law MSC · Two additional councillors

Oversees USSU elections and referendums. Meetings are held as needed, generally beginning around February in preparation for the executive elections. The Chief Returning Officer is a lawyer, traditionally the member of the College of Law serving as the Assistant Chief Returning Officer.

Financial Assessment Committee

Chair: Vice-President of Operations and Finance · Three councillors

Reviews financial matters referred by Council or the Executive Committee and makes recommendations, including those related to the annual budget and capital expenditures. Meetings occur approximately every three weeks or as required.

Governance Committee

Chair: President · Three councillors

Reviews the overall functioning of the USSU Council, including bylaws, policies, and procedures, to ensure they remain effective and up to date. The committee also reviews amendments to governing documents. Meetings occur approximately every three weeks or as needed.

Student and City Connections Committee

Chair: Vice-President of Operations and Finance · Three councillors

Serves as a liaison between students and the City of Saskatoon, focusing on concerns affecting students in the city. Meetings occur approximately every three weeks or as required.

Student Life and Sustainability Committee

Chair: Vice-President of Student Affairs · Three councillors

Organizes student events and activities, identifies areas where students want more programming, and develops activities to address those needs. Meetings occur approximately every three weeks or as required.

Advisory committees explained

The Chair also outlined three advisory committees that were not open for election during this session because the relevant MSCs would automatically serve on them.

- Indigenous Student Advisory Committee: Strengthens the relationship between the USSU, the Indigenous Students' Union, and Indigenous students across the university. The Indigenous Students' MSC serves on this committee by default.
- International Student Advisory Committee: Strengthens the relationship between the USSU and international students. It meets approximately every three weeks. The International Students' MSC serves on it by default.
- Prince Albert Student Advisory Committee: Strengthens the relationship between the USSU and the Prince Albert campus. It meets approximately every three weeks or as needed. The Prince Albert MSC serves on it by default.

Councillor Shah asked whether committees meeting every three weeks would have predetermined meeting days.

Chair Bytyqi answers saying that meeting times would generally be determined by members' availability. Some flexibility would be possible to accommodate councillors' schedules.

Councillor Omotoso asks if a councillor who intends to run in a future election can serve on the Elections Committee.

Chair Bytyqi stated that anyone planning to run in the current USSU executive election cycle would be ineligible to serve on the Elections Committee because of the conflict of interest. The restriction was explained as necessary to ensure that candidates could not oversee an election in which they were competing. The Chair indicated that participation in an earlier election committee would not necessarily prevent someone from running in a later election cycle.

1. Academic Relations Committee: (3 MSCs)
Councillor Chumala and Jaiswal were elected for this committee
2. Advocacy Committee: (3 MSCs)

Four councillors expressed interest in the three available councillor positions. A contested election was therefore required.

Each candidate was invited to speak briefly about their motivation, relevant experience, and what they hoped to contribute.

Candidate presentations:

- Councillor Omotosos: Discussed experience tutoring young people and building their confidence, communication skills, and academic success. The candidate also described previous involvement as an anti-racism ambassador in high school, including participation in conferences and advocacy activities.
- Councillor Chowdhury: Emphasized listening, reflection, and speaking up for others. The candidate described previous experience serving as an advocacy representative on a public health student council, where they raised concerns about the fairness of statistics assessments for international students. Discussions with professors reportedly led to changes in assessment practices and an improvement in the class average.
- Councillor Wardell: Highlighted communication, debate experience, and involvement in community projects that create opportunities for students to develop skills and advocate for themselves. The

candidate emphasized the importance of understanding students' needs and representing their interests.

- Councillor Finnie: Spoke about advocating for students with disabilities and addressing the stigma and discrimination they can experience in university. The candidate also raised concerns about women's safety on campus, particularly in areas where some students do not feel safe.

Ballots were distributed, and councillors ranked their top three candidates. Candidates could vote for themselves or abstain.

The first round resulted in a tie that required an additional ballot.

Final election results:

Councillor Omotoso: 8

Councillor Chowdhury: 14

Councillor Wardell: 10

Councillor Finnie: 9

Abstain: 3

3. Campus Group Committee: (3 MSCs)
Councillor Clark and Councillor Wilson were elected for this committee
4. Code of ethics and disciplinary committee: (3 MSCs)
Councillor Finnie, Councillor Shah and Councillor Chowdhury were elected for this committee.
5. Elections committee: (2 MSCs)
Councillor Clark was elected for this committee
6. Finance and assessment committee: (3 MSCs)
Councillor Wardell and Councillor Boutin were elected to this committee
7. Governance committee: (3 MSCs)
Councillor Omotoso and Councillor Vogler were elected for this committee
8. Student and City of Saskatoon Connection Committee: (3 MSCs)
Councillor Shah and Councillor Omotoso were elected for this committee
9. Student life and sustainability committee: (3 MSCs)
Councillor Radke and Councillor Jaiswal were elected for this committee

Motion to enter formality:

USC018	Councillor Finnie/ Councillor Wardell	Carried
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8. New Business

Chair Bytyqi noted that several committee positions remained vacant and that committee selection would continue at the following meeting.

Councillors were asked to notify MSCs from their respective colleges who had been absent, encouraging them to attend the next meeting so that the remaining vacancies could be filled.

The Chair stressed that filling the committees promptly would allow them to begin meeting and undertaking substantive work.

9. Questions, Comments, and Announcements

VP Gonzalez Avila announced that the following week would be Mental Health Awareness Week.

An art exhibition and opening reception were announced as part of the activities.

- Opening reception: 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Location: North Concourse
- Collaboration: The event was organized in collaboration with the USSU and the Wellness Centre.

Students were encouraged to attend and view the artwork.

Councillor Wilson asked what would happen if committee positions remained vacant at the next meeting. Specifically, the councillor asked whether Council would continue waiting for volunteers or begin assigning councillors to committees.

Chair Bytyqi explained that the preferred approach was to allow councillors to volunteer for committees that interested them. However, participation was an expectation of the councillor role, and everyone was expected to serve on at least one committee.

The Chair emphasized the importance of distributing responsibilities fairly. It would not be equitable for some councillors to serve on three committees while others served on none.

The Chair also noted that councillors needed to contribute meaningfully to the committees they joined, rather than take on excessive responsibilities.

Previous experience had shown that councillors serving on two or three committees could step down from a committee if necessary to make room for another member.

Follow-up actions:

- Contact absent councillors and MSCs to encourage attendance at the next meeting.
- Continue filling committee vacancies.
- Ensure that every councillor is assigned to at least one committee.
- Review committee workloads to avoid overburdening individual councillors.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm.