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**University Students' Council Minutes
October 15, 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
- **Raelynn Boutin:** Agriculture and Bioresources
- **Cody Wilson:** Agriculture and Bioresources
- **Arbe Chumala:** Arts and Science
- **Sam Wardell:** Arts and Science
- **Ilia Rezaei Paskiabi:** Arts and Science
- **Gracie Radke:** Education
- **Parthi Shah:** Edwards School of Business
- **Shubham Jiaswal:** International Students
- **Max Clark:** Kinesiology
- **Melissa Vogler:** Law
- **Jordie Finnie:** St. Thomas More
- **Laiba Masood:** St. Thomas More
- **Isfar Chowdhury:** Medicine
- **Nyasha Alicia Munzara:** International Students

Also Present:

- **Selim Bytyqi:** Chair
- **Stefanie Ewen:** Facilities Manager
- **Atharv Govardhan:** Academic and Governance Assistant

Absent:

- **Ayodele Daniel Omotoso:** Engineering
- **Abby Fortier:** Nursing
- **Chinwe Udenze:** Pharmacy and Nutrition
- **Chang Ge:** Dentistry
- **Nate Desjarlais:** Indigenous Students
- **Mitia Robinson:** Prince Albert
- **Sakina Abedi:** Edwards School of Business

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 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 and move the letter to the city from 5.1 to 7.1 new business

USC019	President Safaein/VP Mendez Rosales	Carried
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5. Minutes and reports for information

5.1 USC Minutes

Motion to approve the last week's meeting minutes

USC020	Councillor Finnie / Councillor Masood	Carried
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5.2 Executive committee minutes and reports:

VP Vincent:

- Campus group appointments and engagement with campus events.
- Completion of work on the uSave program, with the website ready for launch.
- Continued involvement in executive meetings and university committee work.
- VP Vincent expressed appreciation for the campus events attended and highlighted the importance of remaining engaged with student groups.

President Safaeian:

- Attended an executive meeting with university administration.
- Attended a financial review meeting to discuss the USSU budget and expenditures.
- Participated in a bylaws review in preparation for the upcoming Annual General Meeting on November 26, 2026.
- Worked on the uSave website, which is ready, with a planned launch the following Monday.
- Continued developing the policies and bylaws for a proposed Students' Union Presidents' Roundtable in collaboration with other student union presidents. The initiative is intended to establish monthly discussions among student union leaders across Canadian universities and colleges.

- Supported the development of a new pro bono student legal clinic. Identified a location in the Administration Building, and work continued on outreach and recruiting second- and third-year law students to volunteer.
- Assisted students with formal complaints and other individual concerns.
- Attended a student event and worked on the University Student Council report and a related speech.
- Encouraged council members to attend the November 26 Annual General Meeting.

VP Mendez Rosales:

- Met with Elena Geller, Learning Specialist at the library, to discuss the ethical implications of artificial intelligence in classrooms.
- Established a line of communication to help address student questions and concerns related to AI and learning.
- Reviewed relevant committees and bylaws for the AGM.
- Confirmed that the Teaching Excellence Awards nomination process had opened.
- Asked council members to promote the awards within their constituencies so students would nominate deserving professors and teaching assistants.
- Reported seven new student cases and one in-office student case.
- Continued working on student concerns and academic advocacy.

VP Gonzalez Avila:

- Meetings with childcare centres, including annual general meetings and discussions about their operations and needs.
- Exploring opportunities to introduce more art across the university, including a potential mural project.
- Attending the Accessibility Committee.
- Supporting the "To Be Seen" exhibition associated with mental health awareness.
- Addressing student cases.
- Participating in a Truth and Reconciliation related workshop.

Motion to adopt the USC Executive Committee Minutes & Report –

USC021	Councillor Finnie/ Councillor Masood	Carried
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6. College/Constituency Report

6.1 Agriculture and Bioresources:

Councillor Boutin Presented:

- The Agriculture Students' Association participated in the CIBC Run for the Cure on October 4.
- The association donated \$4,482 to breast cancer fundraising.
- A budget pub event raised \$105 for the Canadian Food Bank
- Additional Lunch and Learn sessions were planned for the current and following week.
- The association's major event, Ag Bag Drag, was scheduled for October 23, 2026.
- Ticket distribution was expected to begin soon.

6.2 Arts and Science

Councillor Chumala presented:

- The Arts and Science Students' Union was developing a monthly sponsorship program expected to begin in January 2027.
- Clubs would be able to apply for funding of up to \$200 per month.
- A selection process would determine which clubs received funding.
- A pub crawl was planned for Friday evening, with an 8:00 p.m. start and a recommendation to arrive between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m.
- Most spots were filled, with only a few remaining.

6.3 Dentistry

No councillor presented

6.4 Education

Councillor Radke had nothing to report

6.5 Edwards School of Business

Councillor Shah presented:

- A movie night was scheduled for the evening, with proceeds and non-perishable food donations going toward charity.
- A pumpkin-carving event was planned for the following week, also supporting charitable causes.
- A luncheon with Enterprise was scheduled for Monday.
- A further student event was planned for the following week.

6.6 Engineering

No councillor present

6.7 Indigenous Students

No councillor present

6.8 International Students

Councillor Nyasha presented:

- The International Students' monthly check-in was scheduled for October 30, 2026, in the ISAAC lounge.

6.9 Kinesiology

Councillor Clark presented:

- A spin-class event was taking place that evening.
- The constituency was considering a bake sale or similar fundraising activity before Christmas to raise money for graduation-related expenses.

6.10 Law

Councillor Vogler presented:

- A trivia event held the previous week had been popular.
- Pub golf event was planned.
- Attendance at a Riders game was also planned for the following weekend.

6.11 Medicine

Councillor Chowdhury presented:

- The first-year White Coat Ceremony took place about two weeks earlier.
- A collaborative event involving physiotherapy and other health-related groups introduced students to the Virtual Health Hub.
- The Virtual Health Hub was described as an initiative that allows patients to access healthcare services across Saskatchewan, including from outside Saskatoon.

6.12 Nursing

No councillor present

6.13 Pharmacy and Nutrition

No councillor present

6.14 Prince Albert

No councillor present

6.15 St. Thomas More

Councillor Finnie presented:

- A tote-bag painting event had been successful, with all 78 tote bags distributed.
- A free hot-chocolate stand was planned.

- Students would be encouraged to bring reusable cups, although cups would be available for those who did not have one.

Councillor Masood suggested creating a video or other resource showing AED locations across colleges.

Chair Bytyqi agreed that this was an important public-safety issue and suggested that the executive team explore publishing AED-location information through the USSU or other university communication channels.

6.16 Western College of Veterinary Medicine

No councillor present

7. Business

7.1 Letter to city of Saskatoon by the USSU

President Safaeian explained that the letter called on the City of Saskatoon to recognize the dignity of unhoused people and provide safe alternatives rather than relying on evictions and encampment clearances.

The guest asked what the USSU intended to accomplish by sending the letter.

President Safaeian explained that the objective was to raise awareness, urge the city to treat unhoused people with dignity and challenge the practice of removing residents from encampments without providing suitable alternatives.

The guest, who is a representative of the Red Bear Party and is deeply concerned about the encampments, brought forward some insights:

1. Displacement of unhoused residents

- The guest reported that an encampment had been cleared the previous week, displacing more than 200 people.
- According to the guest, many residents were moved into other encampments rather than provided with permanent housing.
- The guest emphasized that encampments can provide important social connections and informal support networks. Displacement can separate residents from people they rely on for their daily needs.

2. Lack of alternative shelter

- The guest expressed concern about insufficient shelter space for people displaced from encampments.
- The guest stated that the city had not communicated plans to create additional shelter spaces.
- The approaching winter was identified as an urgent concern because residents could face unsafe conditions without adequate alternatives.

3. Treatment of residents during encampment clearances

- The guest alleged that police officers removed or discarded residents' belongings and restricted access to former encampment locations.
- The guest disputed public narratives suggesting that police had meaningfully assisted volunteers and residents during the displacement process.
- The guest argued that the city should reconsider how it approaches encampment clearances when safe alternatives are unavailable.

4. City spending and social services

- The guest cited a Saskatoon Police Service budget of approximately \$158 million, reportedly increasing to around \$167 million.
- The guest argued that more funding should go to social services, housing, and other supports for unhoused residents.
- The guest also noted limited funding for organizations that provide services to this population.

5. Indigenous residents and reconciliation

- The guest emphasized that many people affected by encampment clearances were Indigenous.
- The guest mentioned that this should be acknowledged in the USSU's advocacy, particularly in the context of Truth and Reconciliation.
- The guest also described the detention of an elderly, blind Indigenous man known as David Findlay, and his son during the encampment clearance. The guest questioned the justification for their detention.

Councillor Wilson suggested adding concrete examples of organizations or services the guest mentioned, rather than relying solely on general statements.

Councillor Masood suggested including the reported cost of a public rock sculpture, citing approximately \$300,000, as a comparison with the needs of unhoused residents.

Councillor Masood also recommended:

- Explicitly acknowledging the disproportionate impact on Indigenous residents.
- Including relevant information about the opioid crisis.
- Making the letter more direct about the population affected and the social support required.

The guest reiterated the account of David Findlay and his son's detention during the encampment clearance. The guest argued that the incident could illustrate the impact of enforcement actions on people involved in supporting unhoused residents.

Councillor Clark asked whether writing a letter was the most effective initial response or whether other forms of advocacy should be considered?

The guest supported sending the letter as an initial step but recommended further action.

Suggested approaches included:

- Sending a representative to speak directly at a City Council meeting.
- Inviting Red Bear Party representatives to participate in USSU Advocacy Committee discussions.
- Continuing communication with city officials and pursuing further advocacy beyond the letter.

Chair asked to table the letter for the upcoming USC meeting, and to present the letters with the appropriate changes

8. New Business

9. Questions, Comments, and Announcements

Councillor Vogler reported ongoing difficulties obtaining repairs for facilities in the College of Law.

The Facilities Manager, Stefanie Ewen, noted that some areas might be short-staffed and encouraged the president of Law student society to follow up.

VP Gonzalez Avila announced a rock-climbing social event scheduled for October 20, 2026.

- The event would take place at the PAC climbing facility.
- Registration would be advertised through Instagram and other USSU social media channels.
- Capacity was limited to 16 participants.
- A registration link or QR code would be shared.

Councillor Finnie asked whether students who had not completed orientation needed to do so before participating.

VP Gonzalez Avila responded by stating that students who had not completed the required orientation would need to attend a one-hour orientation before participating. The discussion indicated that participants would not need to pay again for the orientation in the circumstances described, although the precise eligibility conditions were not fully clear.

Councillor Masood asked whether the USSU had issued a letter concerning a proposed AI data centre near Regina and whether council could take a position on the issue.

The guest described opposition to the proposed hyperscale AI data centre in the Rural Municipality of Sherwood near Regina.

The guest stated that:

- The proposed facility would be extremely large, about the size of four Disney parks.
- The project could place significant pressure on Saskatchewan's natural resources.
- The Red Bear Party had supported a moratorium on data centres through municipal advocacy in Saskatoon.
- Related efforts to oppose the Regina-area project had encountered obstacles.

Chair Bytyqi mentioned that the USSU executives will look more into it.

VP Mendez Rosales reminded councillors that nominations for the Teaching Excellence Awards had opened on October 13.

- The nomination period was expected to run for approximately two weeks.
- Councillors were asked to inform their constituencies and encourage students to nominate professors and teaching assistants.

Councillor Masood raised concerns about the lack of accessible and safe avenues for students to report inappropriate conduct by faculty members and other individuals in positions of authority.

Councillor Masood described previous experiences involving:

- An alleged discriminatory comment by a professor.
- A non-academic misconduct complaint involving a disagreement with another student.
- Concerns about how supporting evidence and complaints had been handled.
- Difficulties navigating university reporting procedures and power imbalances within academic departments.

VP Gonzalez Avila acknowledged the frustration associated with these processes and indicated that there was room for further advocacy.

VP Mendez Rosales explained that work was underway to identify better ways for students to raise concerns about professors.

The current process often directs students to department heads, which may not feel safe or appropriate for everyone. VP Mendez Rosales raised these concerns with university administration and sought better alternatives.

Councillor Masood shared a personal account of concerns about privacy and how sensitive family circumstances are handled within the university environment.

The councillor described difficulty obtaining a satisfactory response through the relevant university channels and argued that students need a safer, more supportive process for raising concerns.

VP Mendez Rosales acknowledged the concern and reiterated that the matter was being raised with university administration.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 pm.