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**University Students' Council Minutes
October 22, 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
- **Ilia Rezaei Paskiabi:** Arts and Science
- **Chang Ge:** Dentistry
- **Gracie Radke:** Education
- **Parthi Shah:** Edwards School of Business
- **Sakina Abedi:** Edwards School of Business
- **Shubham Jiaswal:** International Students
- **Max Clark:** Kinesiology
- **Melissa Vogler:** Law
- **Nate Desjarlais:** Indigenous Students
- **Jordie Finnie:** St. Thomas More
- **Laiba Masood:** St. Thomas More
- **Nyasha Alicia Munzara:** International Students
- **Ayodele Daniel Omotoso:** Engineering
- **Isfar Chowdhury:** Medicine

Also Present:

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

Absent:

- **Abby Fortier:** Nursing
- **Chinwe Udenze:** Pharmacy and Nutrition
- **Mitia Robinson:** Prince Albert

1. **Call to Order**
The meeting was called to order at 6:06 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 move Senate election to 8.2

USC022	President Safaeian/ VP Mendez Rosales	Carried
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Motion to move letter to city to 8.3

USC023	President Safaeian / VP Gonzalez Avila	Carried
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Motion to move impeachment of Nutrition and Pharmacy Councillor to 9.1

USC024	President Safaeian / Councillor Finnie	Carried
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Motion to approve the new agenda

USC025	Councillor Wilson / Councillor Vogler	Carried
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5. Council Address:

No council address was present

6. Minutes and Reports for Information

6.1 Amended agenda from last week

Chair Bytyqi displayed the amended agenda from last week and noted it to show transparency from USSU's side.

6.2 Executive Committee Minutes & Report –

Motion to adopt the USC meeting from last week–

USC026	Councillor Masood/ Councillor Finnie	Carried
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6.3 Executive meeting minutes and reports:

President Safaeian:

- Meetings with the USSU governance team and senior management.
- Participation in University Council and executive meetings.
- Ongoing policy and bylaw development.

- Participation in the Canadian Student Union Presidents' Roundtable, which brings together student union presidents to discuss institutional issues and share strategies.
- Assistance with two student formal complaint cases.
- Support for student events, including campus and football-related activities.
- Initial work toward establishing an Association of Constituency Presidents (AOCP).

VP Vincent:

- VP Vincent reported on meetings relating to financial review, campus group appointments, faith leadership, and University Council.
- VP Vincent also presented the completed USSU student discounts webpage called USave, developed in collaboration with the President and relevant project staff.
- The webpage allows students to browse participating businesses, view partnership terms and conditions, and access applicable discounts and promotional codes. Students may be required to present identification or use a specified code to access an offer.
- Council was encouraged to report instances when participating businesses fail to honour advertised discounts so the USSU can follow up with those businesses.
- Work to add additional businesses and expand the uSave's listings remains ongoing.

VP Mendez Rosales:

- An assessment policy meeting.
- Participation in the relevant committee and governance meetings.
- Review of bylaws with the executive team.
- Review of students at large candidates.
- Continued work on the Teaching Excellence Awards.
- Councillors were encouraged to nominate deserving teaching assistants and professors.

VP Gonzalez Avila:

- Student casework and support.
- Review of bylaws and governance matters.
- Participation in USSU Childcare Centre governance discussions.
- Meetings with student organization representatives and relevant campus services.
- Volunteer support for the Good Breakfast.
- Work toward completing the University Council report.

Motion to approve the executive meeting minutes and reports

USC027	Councillor Shah/ Councillor Finnie	Carried
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7. College/Constituency Report

7.1 Agriculture and Bioresources:

Councillor Wilson presents:

- Ag Bag Drag was sold out and scheduled for October 23 at Prairieland Park.
- The AgBio Challenge was tentatively scheduled for February 6, with the venue still to be confirmed.
- The annual blood drive was underway, with appointments scheduled across multiple dates.
- The annual Halloween food drive was scheduled to begin the following week. The aim is to match its previous contribution of more than 485 kg of non-perishable food to the Saskatoon food bank.
- A small-scale fundraiser, such as a bake sale, was being considered to support Ronald McDonald House in Saskatoon.

7.2 Arts and Science

Councillor Rezaei presents:

- The recent Pub Crawl was successful.
- A November event focused on studying was being planned in preparation for final examinations.
- The Dean of Arts and Science had also circulated information about an initiative to rebrand and reconsider the culture of liberal arts education in the context of artificial intelligence. A meeting was scheduled for October 29, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., at Convocation Hall.

7.3 Dentistry

Councillor Ge presents:

- A pumpkin-painting event scheduled for October 29, with a \$5 participation fee.
- A collaboration with the Health Science Students' Association on a package-records event scheduled for November 4, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., in Room 2B64 of the Health Science Building's Food and Nutrition Laboratory.
- A college formal scheduled for November 7.

7.4 Education

Councillor Radke presents:

- The by-election had concluded, and a new executive was being welcomed.
- Further event updates were expected at subsequent meetings.

7.5 Edwards School of Business

Councillor Abedi presents:

- Student versus Professor Trivia Night was taking place.
- A pumpkin-carving event was scheduled for October 28, with a \$5 registration fee. Donations were to support Chokecherry Studios.
- The co-op recruitment season was also approaching its conclusion, with offers expected on October 28.

7.6 Engineering

Councillor Omotoso presents:

- Student academic-support initiatives were underway across several engineering disciplines.
- Examples included:
 - Chemistry and mathematics preparation support.
 - Examination preparation organized by the Civil Engineering Student Group.
 - Continued academic support during the midterm period.
- Councillor Omotoso also presented results from a student survey identifying priorities within engineering facilities:
 1. Flies and pests in the engineering library: 43.59% of respondents identified this as a concern.
 2. Food and snacks: 28.21% identified this as a priority.
 3. Building aesthetics: Students suggested improvements such as additional lighting and decorative features.
- Respondents represented multiple engineering disciplines, including civil, geological, and mechanical engineering.
- Councillor Omotoso intends to discuss the findings further with the executive team.

7.7 Indigenous Students

Councillor Desjarlais presents:

- The Indigenous Business Student Society's scholarship applications were open until November 8 for eligible self-identified Indigenous students. Council members were encouraged to share the opportunity.
- Outreach was underway to Indigenous student organizations, including Indigenous law and science-related groups, to strengthen collaboration and student support.
- An Indigenous career fair was scheduled for November 3–4 at Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre. The event was expected to include 16 major employers and was open to students interested in participating.
- Continued advocacy for a proposed Indigenous student fee was discussed. The proposal involved a \$1 fee applied to undergraduate students' tuition to support Indigenous student initiatives. Discussions with university leadership were ongoing.

- The representative discussed the historical development of Indigenous student support and the importance of improving institutional support for Indigenous instructors and students.
- A family Halloween event was scheduled at Gordon Oakes for October 30 at 7:00 p.m., with potential collaboration from the Indigenous Students' Union.

7.8 International Students

Councillor Nyasha presents:

Monthly check-in happening in ISSAC on October 30th for all the international students.

7.9 Kinesiology

Councillor Clark presents:

- Kin formal was planned for early to mid-January, with a format similar to the previous year's event.
- A pickleball social or event was also being explored for February, with potential venues being contacted.

7.10 Law

Councillor Vogler presents:

- Fall formal was scheduled for the upcoming Saturday. A raffle was planned, with proceeds going to Share and Care.
- Recruitment activities for first-year students were underway. Indigenous law students had also attended the Indigenous Bar Association's annual conference in Halifax.

7.11 Medicine

Councillor Chowdhury presents:

- The Saskatchewan Medical Students' Society held a large meeting attended by approximately 45 members to discuss policy updates and future initiatives.
- Updates included:

The creation of a rural medicine representative position in response to the expansion of rural training seats.

Approximately \$4,100 raised through the Health Care Classic for the Rural and Remote Health Services Institution.

Ratification of student groups, allowing groups to begin organizing events.

Upcoming educational events on vascular surgery, abortion and healthcare, and breast reconstruction in the context of breast cancer.

Plans to host a restorative tattoo artist to discuss the impact of restorative tattooing on patients.

7.12 Nursing

No councillor present

7.13 Pharmacy and Nutrition

No councillor present

7.14 Prince Albert

No councillor present

7.15 St. Thomas More

Councillor Finnie presents:

- The fall festival was scheduled for October 28–29.
- Planned activities included a collaborative hot chocolate event with Just Youth on October 29, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., as well as bracelet-making and keychain-making activities from 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

7.16 Western College of Veterinary Medicine

No councillor present

8. Business:

Motion to enter informality:

USC028	President Safaeian / Councillor Finnie	Carried
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8.1 USC Committees selection continued

Chair Bytyqi explained that some committee memberships had already been determined through earlier votes, and reopening those decisions would not necessarily be appropriate. Vacancies would be filled as needed.

Council then reviewed its committee assignments, vacancies, and membership availability. Members were invited to withdraw from committees where necessary and volunteer for vacancies.

Councillor Jaiswal withdrew from the Student Life and Sustainability Committee.

Motion to have Councillor Masood on the Academic Relations Committee

USC029	Councillor Finnie/ President Safaeian	Carried
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No councillors were elected for Campus Group Committee

Motion to have Councillor Chumala be on the Elections Committee

USC030	Councillor Masood / Councillor Finnie	Carried
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Motion to have Councillor Abedi be on the Financial Assessment Committee

USC031	Councillor Vogler / Councillor Wilson	Carried
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Motion to have Councillor Rezaei be on the Governance Committee

USC032	Councillor Clark / Councillor Finnie	Carried
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Motion to have Councillor Rezaei be on the Student and City of Saskatoon Connections Committee

USC033	Councillor Wilson / Councillor Abedi	Carried
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Motion to have Councillor Desjarlais and Councillor Abedi be on the Student Life and Sustainability Committee

USC034	Councillor Wilson / Councillor Finnie	Carried
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At the conclusion of the committee review, Chair Bytyqi noted that the Campus Groups Committee still required one additional member.

The Chair indicated that the vacancy would be brought back to Council at the next meeting so that the committee could be fully staffed.

8.2 Senate Election

Chair Bytyqi explained that student Senate positions were ordinarily filled through a public student election held at the same time as the USSU election. When vacancies remained, Council could elect student representatives internally.

Three student Senate positions were available.

Chair Bytyqi emphasized that the Senate was separate from the USSU and was considered the university's highest governing body. Being elected to the Senate would therefore be a separate commitment from serving on the USSU.

Chair Bytyqi explained that the first major Senate meeting had already taken place, but elected students could still participate in committee work.

Examples of possible committee work included:

- Awarding honorary degrees.
- Participating in matters relating to non-academic misconduct.
- Serving on Senate committees requiring student participation.

Chair Bytyqi explained that another major meeting was expected in April and could occupy an entire Saturday. Senators might also be expected to complete committee work throughout the year.

Councillor Masood asked whether it was worthwhile to join the Senate as a way to advocate for students?

Chair Bytyqi described the answer as both yes and no. The Senate provides access to senior university administrators and gives student voices a platform. However, student senators are a small minority within a much larger governing body, so they may have fewer opportunities to speak than they would within the USC.

Each interested councillor was allowed some time to present:

Councillor Rezaei: A political studies student and member of the College of Arts and Science Student Council, explained that university governance and political processes were central interests.

He viewed Senate membership as an opportunity to learn more about university-level decision-making and work alongside senators involved in the broader governance of the university.

Councillor Masood: Described three years of involvement in student-group advocacy and previous service as president of the Nursing Student Association.

She spoke about situations in which students felt mistreated or unsupported and argued that universities needed to listen to students' lived experiences, not only rely on professional expertise.

Councillor Masood referenced previous discussions about serious student mental-health concerns in Nursing and described more recent cases in which students faced difficult circumstances and felt they had not received appropriate support.

She further emphasized the importance of advocating for people who might lack the resources, support, or confidence to speak for themselves. She also reflected on personal privilege and the importance of making space for people experiencing adversity.

Councillor Shah: Described involvement in campus groups, student organizations, and community initiatives.

She explained that this experience had provided opportunities to advocate for issues both on campus and in the wider community.

As an HR major, she was interested in strengthening relationships between the university, government, the province, and the City of Saskatoon, while helping address student concerns.

Councillor Jaiswal: Described having spent four years at the university and initially experiencing campus life as an outsider.

He explained that listening to students and becoming involved with clubs had helped build an understanding of what students wanted from the university.

Councillor Jaiswal also views Senate membership as an opportunity to communicate students' experiences and advocate for them within a larger decision-making body.

Councillor Clark: Described longstanding involvement in student governance, including serving as student vice-president in high school.

He emphasized that governance often depends on attention to detail and making small improvements rather than pursuing sweeping changes.

Councillor Clark explained that the candidate would focus on identifying problems, addressing them incrementally, and ensuring that governance processes worked effectively.

Councillor Finnie: spoke about the need to advocate for students with disabilities and reduce the stigma they face.

He described difficulties obtaining or changing Accessibility and Equity Services accommodations when course schedules change unexpectedly. Councillor Finnie explained that short notice, such as a professor becoming ill and a midterm being rescheduled, can create problems when accommodation requests require advance notice.

Councillor Finnie argued that these barriers add stress for students with disabilities and that the Senate could be an opportunity to advocate for more accessible and practical accommodation processes.

A ballot vote then began, in which each council member could vote for three people.

The first round voting results were:

Councillor Rezaei: (13)

Councillor Masood: (2)

Councillor Shah: (11)

Councillor Jaiswal: (11)

Councillor Clark: (16)

Councillor Finnie: (4)

Councillor Clark and Rezaei were elected as the senate members. A re-election was held between Councillor Jaiswal and Councillor Shah because they tied for third place in the vote.

The results of the re-election:

Councillor Shah: (11)
Councillor Jaiswal: (8)
Abstain: (3)

Councillor Shah won the election and became the third councillor selected for the Senate.

8.3 Updated letter to the city

Councillors were given time to review the letter in the meeting package before discussion and voting.

Motion to add "We also call on the Saskatoon City Council to critically examine its municipal budget priorities and ensure that addressing homelessness receives the resources and urgency this crisis demands"

USC035	Councillor Masood / Councillor Finnie	Carried
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Abstained by VP Azul Gonzalez, VP Mendez Rosales and Councillor Vogler

Motion to send the newly amended letter

USC036	Councillor Vogler/ Councillor Boutin	Carried
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9. New Business

9.1 impeachment of Nutrition and pharmacy councillor

Chair Bytyqi discussed attendance concerns involving the councillor of the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition.

He stated that the councillors concerned had not attended any USC meetings held to date this year, including about seven meetings. Chair Bytyqi also indicated that outreach had been attempted multiple times without a satisfactory response or a clear plan for returning.

Chair Bytyqi emphasized that when a councillor does not attend, their college or constituency is left without effective representation. He also noted that other students might be interested in filling the positions and participating in committees and Council work.

Chair Bytyqi concluded by saying an impeachment vote would be held the following week.

10. Questions, Comments, and Announcements

VP Gonzalez Avila announced that the USSU and Parking Services' previous bike-lock assistance program had been discontinued following complaints.

Members were encouraged to remind students to secure their belongings and use appropriate locks. Students were also advised to contact Protective Services if they witnessed unlawful activity.

Councillor Wilson delivered a statement acknowledging a tragic incident at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright.

The statement referred to the deaths of four Canadian Armed Forces members and injuries to dozens of others, some of whom were reportedly in critical condition.

The statement noted that many students had connections to the Wainwright area, making the tragedy particularly close to home for members of the university community.

Councillor Wilson emphasized the importance of acknowledging the loss, recognizing its impact on families and fellow service members, and supporting affected communities.

Councillor Finnie asked whether the council would advocate for the University to fly Canadian flags at half-mast for the remainder of the year?

Chair Bytyqi indicated that the request could be raised through the appropriate university channels, including communication with the Senate. They could not guarantee that the University would approve the request, but agreed to pursue it.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm.