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

University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

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

Dear Mayor Block and Members of Saskatoon City Council,

On behalf of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU), we are writing to express our concern about the City of Saskatoon's approach to public encampments and evicting people experiencing homelessness without adequate alternatives.

The recent situation near 19th and 20th Street West highlights the problem with this approach. Displacing people without providing safe alternatives does not solve homelessness; it pushes vulnerable residents into more precarious situations and further strains community services.

We urge City Council to increase funding for affordable and supportive housing, emergency shelter, mental health care, addiction treatment, harm reduction, and other essential social services. The opioid crisis makes these supports especially urgent. People experiencing homelessness need access to overdose prevention, naloxone, treatment, and ongoing care, not displacement that disrupts their connections to vital services.

Saskatoon's homelessness crisis disproportionately affects Indigenous residents. The City's 2025 Point-in-Time Count identified 1,931 people experiencing homelessness, approximately 83% of whom identified as Indigenous. This disparity highlights the need for culturally appropriate, Indigenous-led services that address the impacts of colonialism, systemic barriers, and intergenerational trauma.

Saskatoon organizations such as the Saskatoon Tribal Council's Sawēyihtotān program, Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Services, Red Bear Party and CUMFI provide important outreach, housing, and community supports. The City should work with these organizations and other service providers to expand services and ensure residents have safe, realistic alternatives before dismantling encampments.

We recognize the City's responsibilities regarding public safety and public spaces. However, these responsibilities must be balanced with the dignity and well-being of people experiencing homelessness. We ask Council to prioritize long-term housing solutions and meaningful collaboration with Indigenous leaders, community organizations, and people with lived experience rather than relying on displacement.

The USSU would welcome the opportunity to speak directly with the Mayor and City Council about these concerns and discuss practical solutions.

We urge the City to invest in housing and social supports that address the root causes of homelessness and ensure all Saskatoon residents can live safely and with dignity.

Sincerely,



Abtin Safaeian
President, USSU



Elmer Vincent
VP Operations and Finance, USSU



Ashley Mendez Rozalez
VP Academic, USSU



Azul González Avila
VP Student Affairs, USSU