USask Board of Governors Public Minutes

June 23 and 24, 2026

Peter MacKinnon Building, Room 238

Members:	Corinna Stevenson (Vice-Chair, Acting Chair for June meeting), Mike Marsh, Abtin Safaeian, Ryan Walker, Karen, Herb McFaull, Marty Seymour, Grant Devine, Scott Banda, Vince Bruni-Bossio
Regrets:	Keith Martell, Karen Stewart
Present:	Greg Fowler, Deidre (Dee) Henne, Patti McDougall, Baljit Singh, Kim Kroll-Goodwin, Heather Persson, Alex Foster, David Stack, Julian Demkiw (University Secretary), Anna Okapiec (Recording)
Guests:	Aneesa Ruffudeen (Agenda Item 9.3)

Call to Order – 8:35 am

1. **Board Only with the President** (In-Camera)

2. **Approval of the April Agenda**
   That the Agenda be approved as circulated.

3. **Chair Remarks**
   The Acting Chair provided a personal land acknowledgement, reflecting on reconciliation, equity and community responsibility. She welcomed newly appointed Board member Abtin Safaeian, the new USSU President, and invited him to introduce himself. Mr. Safaeian shared his journey to Canada, his academic pursuits in neuroscience, leadership experience, commitment to student representation, and his intention to build his future in Saskatchewan. The Board welcomed him to his first meeting.

4. **President's Report**
   The President provided updates on strategic planning, reporting that more than 3,000 members of the university community and external stakeholders had been engaged. He noted that the emerging theme of the planning process is "local to global." Board members also received updates on several strategic initiatives, including nuclear strategy development, programming opportunities, and positive engagement with the newly appointed Deputy Minister.

5. **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**
   Ryan Walker declared a conflict for any faculty-related matters.

6. **Approval of April 2026 Minutes (Regular & Public)**
   That the minutes be approved as circulated.

7. **Business Arising: Action Items Review**
   The Board reviewed the status of outstanding action items arising from previous meetings. Members noted progress on several items and discussed the importance of establishing timelines for remaining actions to support ongoing monitoring and accountability.

Audit and Finance Committee

8. **A&F Chair's Report**
   The Audit & Finance Chair, Corinna Stevenson, reported on discussions held at the committee meeting, highlighting oversight of financial reporting, pension plans, enterprise risk management, the accountability reporting framework, the Spend Policy review, and internal audit activities. The Chair noted the committee's focus on ensuring meaningful performance indicators, strengthening governance practices, and maintaining sound financial stewardship.

9. **Reports for Board Discussion**

9.1. Q4 Financial and Risk Results

The CFO presented the year-end financial and risk results, outlining strong investment performance and improved financial sustainability projections following the provincial operating grant agreement. The Board discussed enrolment trends, reserve management practices, subsidiary and affiliate oversight, cyber security risks, and enterprise risk management. Members reviewed the status of several affiliated entities, including GIFS, CLS, the Land Trust and GEMS.

9.2. Spend Policy

Board members reviewed the proposed Spend Policy amendments and additional analysis requested by the Board, including long-term modelling and stress testing. Discussion focused on balancing intergenerational equity, protecting purchasing power, supporting current beneficiaries, and maintaining competitiveness in fundraising. Members noted the importance of continued annual review and monitoring.

Motion: *On recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approves the updated Spending Policy with an annual spending rate of 4.75% effective May 1, 2026.*

9.3. 2025-26 Internal Audit Report

The Chief Audit Executive provided an update on the annual audit plan and reported that audit activities were progressing as planned and within budget. Management's progress in implementing audit recommendations was reviewed, and updates were provided on the confidential disclosure process, which fully transitioned to the Governance Office. The Board noted upcoming reviews related to domestic student recruitment, third-party vendor risk management, and cybersecurity.

9.4. Pension Plan and SERP Actuarial Valuations

The CFO presented the actuarial valuation results for the pension and SERP plans. The Board noted that the plans remained in a healthy funded position and that no special contributions were required. Members discussed factors influencing liabilities and actuarial assumptions and received assurance that the plans remain financially sound.

9.5. USask Pension Plans Results of December 31, 2025 - Annual Integrated Audit

The A&F Chair summarized the results of the annual integrated audit and Provincial Auditor review. The Board noted that the audit resulted in a clean opinion with no significant deficiencies, findings of non-compliance, or material concerns. Members emphasized the importance of continued oversight and analysis of pension plan management and investment performance.

10. A&F Decision Items for Consent Approval

The A&F Chair invited a single motion to approve the following Audit and Finance items as a package. A motion to approve was moved and seconded. The motion carried.

10.1. Financial Policy Updates

Motion: *On recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approves the financial policy updates, as attached, effective June 24, 2026.*

10.2. Audit & Finance Committee Work Plan Revision

Motion: *On recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approves the revised 2026-2027 Audit and Finance Committee Work Plan, including the addition of an oversight-level legend and minor administrative refinements, effective June 23, 2026.*

10.3. Approval of Draft Response to Provincial Auditor Letter of USask Pension Plans – Results of December 31, 2025 – Annual Integrated Audit

Motion: *On recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approves the draft response to the Provincial Auditor letter of University of Saskatchewan Pension Plans — Results of December 31, 2025, Annual Integrated Audit for management to forward the response to the Provincial Auditor, with the condition that the final letter does not contain any significant changes, effective June 24, 2026.*

10.4. Approval of Defined Benefit Pension Plan Financial Statements

Motion: *On recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approves the financial statements of the University of Saskatchewan 1999 Academic Pension Plan; the University of Saskatchewan and Federated Colleges Non-Academic Pension Plan; and the University of Saskatchewan Academic Employees' Pension Plan (Retirees Plan), for the year ended December 31, 2025, subject to completion of the audit and receipt of the Auditor's final report from the Provincial Auditor effective June 24, 2026.*

10.5. Approval of Defined Contribution Pension Plan Financial Statements

Motion: *On recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board of Governors approves the financial statements of the University of Saskatchewan 2000 Academic Money Purchase Pension Plan (MPP Plan), and the Pension Plan for the Eligible Employees at the University of Saskatchewan (Research Plan), for the year ended December 31, 2025, subject to completion of the audit and receipt of the Auditor's final report from the Provincial Auditor effective June 24, 2026.*

That the Board of Governors approve all motions within Item 10 as presented.

Land and Facilities Committee

11. L&F Chair's Report

The Land & Facilities Chair, Marty Seymour, reported on committee discussions regarding deferred maintenance, capital project reporting, the farmstead strategy, and Land Trust matters. Members acknowledged improvements in capital reporting and discussed the importance of long-term planning for deferred maintenance. The Board also expressed interest in continuing education and discussions regarding the Land Trust framework and governance model.

12. L&F Reports for Board Discussion

12.1. Land Trust Head Leases: Sutherland

The Vice-President Administration presented the proposed head lease for the Sutherland parcel as a foundational step in implementing the Land Trust development strategy. Discussion focused on the lease structure, government approval requirements, governance oversight, student housing opportunities, risk mitigation measures, and long-term development considerations.

Motion: *On recommendation of the Land and Facilities Committee, the Board of Governors approves the head lease between USask and USask Properties Investment Inc. (USPII) for the development of Sutherland South based on key terms as follows, effective June 23, 2026:*

- *Lease is conditional on receiving Minister approval by way of Order-In-Council.*
- *Lease term is 99 years with annual one-year extensions into perpetuity if there is a change to the provincial legislation*
- *Initial Rent is $3,190,000 to be paid at year 5*
- *Evergreen Fees, which vary by housing unit and estimated between $25-$56 per unit per month, will be paid annually as rent to USask with a terminal value approximating $11 million. USask will invest up to 10% of these fees into an Evergreen Renewal fund in its non-endowed investment pool to support USPII in maintaining the evergreen infrastructure.*
- *Upon expiration of the lease or termination with one-years notice, USask has the option to take back the land by way of purchasing improvements from USPII (or sublessees) based on fair market value. USask will invest up to 10% of Annual Rent in its non-endowed investment pool to support future repurchase needs.*
- *Payments to USask from USPII are due at the end of each calendar year with RBC Prime plus a 3% charge to payments in arrears.*
- *USPII will develop the land according to Vision 2057 as outlined in the Concept Plan (Attachment #1).*

13. Decision Items for Consent Approval

The L&F Chair invited a single motion to approve the following Land and Facilities items as a package. A motion to approve was moved and seconded. The motion carried.

13.1. CFI Proposals Exceeding $500,000: Brain Circuit Assessment Tools

Motion: *On recommendation of the Land and Facilities Committee, the Board of Governors grant final approval of the purchase of Brain Circuit Assessment Tools, at a capital cost of $590,960.*

13.2. CFI Proposals Exceeding $500,000: Modular Dynamic Wind Tunnel

Motion: *On recommendation of the Land and Facilities Committee, the Board of Governors grant final approval of the purchase of the Modular Dynamic Wind Tunnel, at a capital cost of $1,469,118.*

13.3. Health Sciences Building Optimization Project: Priority 2B Deconstruction, Infrastructure Remediation & Abatement

Motion: *On recommendation of the Land & Facilities committee, the Board of Governors approves to proceed with Priority 2-B construction activities including deconstruction, infrastructure remediation, and hazardous material abatement in selected areas of the Health Science Building (B Wing, 5th Floor) at an estimated cost of $5.66 million, effective June 23, 2026.*

13.4. Health Sciences Parking Lot #7 Upgrade

Motion: *On recommendation of the Land and Facilities Committee, the Board of Governors grants final approval of the Health Sciences Parking Lot #7 Project at a capital cost of $966,813, effective June 23, 2026.*

13.5. Naming: William Martin Backlund Classroom

Motion: *On recommendation of the Land and Facilities Committee, the Board of Governors approves the naming of classroom 2B04 in the College of Engineering as the "William Martin Backlund Classroom", effective June 23, 2026.*

13.6. Naming: Nutrien Donor Recognition

Motion 1: *On recommendation of the Land and Facilities Committee, the Board of Governors approves the naming of the lecture theatre, room ENG1B71 in the College of Engineering as the "Nutrien Lecture Theatre", effective June 23, 2026.*

Motion 2: *On recommendation of the Land and Facilities Committee, the Board of Governors approves the naming of Digital Agriculture Centre, room 1E13 in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources as the "Nutrien Digital Agriculture Centre", effective June 23, 2026.*

That the Board of Governors approve all motions within Item 13 as presented.

Human Resources Committee

14. HR Chair's Report

The Human Resources Committee Chair, Herb McFaull, reported on committee discussions relating to workplace culture, safety, faculty merit processes and workforce matters. Members discussed equity considerations in merit outcomes and the metrics used to monitor workforce practices.

15. Decision Item for Consent Approval

15.1. 2026 Promotion and Tenure Appeals

Motion: *On recommendation of the Human Resources Committee, the Board of Governors approves:*

1. *The award of tenure to Dr. Peter Pioli (Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology & Immunology, College of Medicine), effective July 1, 2026.*

2. *The following promotions, effective July 1, 2026:*
   - *Dr. Mitch Weegman to the rank of Professor (Department of Biology, College of Arts and Science)*
   - *Dr. Roslyn Compton to the rank of Professor (College of Nursing)*
   - *Dr. Payam Dehghani to the rank of Professor (Department of Medicine – Cardiology, College of Medicine)*
   - *Dr. Osama Ahmed to the rank of Associate Professor (Department of Oncology, College of Medicine)*

Governance and Executive Committee

16. G&E Chair's Report

The Governance and Executive Committee Chair, Corinna Stevenson, reported on committee work related to board governance, committee structures, action item monitoring, bylaw reviews, and governance processes. Discussion focused on improving decision-support materials, standardizing information provided to the Board, and enhancing Board understanding of the university's academic mission.

17. G&E Reports for Board Discussion

17.1. Board Chair Reappointment

The G&E Chair advised that Keith Martell had indicated his willingness to serve an additional term as Board Chair. The Board discussed the recommendation and approved the reappointment.

Motion: *On recommendation of the Governance and Executive Committee, the Board of Governors approves the reappointment of Keith Martell as Chair of the Board for a two-year term, effective July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2028.*

18. Decision Items for Consent Approval

The G&E Chair invited a single motion to approve the following Governance and Executive items as a package. A motion to approve was moved and seconded. The motion carried.

18.1. VP Administration Policy Approval

Motion: *On recommendation of the Governance and Executive committee, the Board of Governors approves the following policies, each effective July 1, 2026.*

- *Biosafety,*
- *Fieldwork and Associated Travel Safety,*
- *Working Alone,*
- *Hearing Conservation,*
- *Data Management,*
- *Post office and mailroom*

And that the Board of Governors approves the removal of the following policies, effective July 1, 2026.

- *Compliance Enforcement Pertaining to Hazardous Agents,*
- *Contractor Hot Work,*
- *Furniture*

18.2. Appointment of USask Member to the Shurniak Gallery Inc

Motion: *On recommendation of the Governance and Executive Committee, the Board of Governors approves the appointment of Dr. Lori Birrell as the University of Saskatchewan's regular member in the Shurniak Gallery Inc, effective July 1, 2026.*

18.3. Appointment to Board Committees

Motion: *On recommendation of the Governance and Executive Committee, the Board of Governors approves the appointment of Abtin Safaeian to the Audit and Finance Committee of the Board, effective June 23, 2026.*

That the Board of Governors approve all motions within Item 18 as presented.

Board Matters

19. University Governance Update

The University Secretary provided an update on University Council activities and governance matters. Members were advised that Council had expressed interest in strengthening engagement with the Board and that future opportunities for collaboration were being explored. Updates were also provided regarding governance initiatives and policy matters considered by Council.

20. Stone Barn Update

Management provided an update on future planning for the Stone Barn site. Discussion focused on preserving the heritage significance of the structure while maximizing academic value and future use opportunities. Members emphasized the importance of reflecting the original barn's character and preserving its legacy within future development plans.

21. Greystone Heritage Trust Annual Reporting

The President presented the annual report regarding expenditures from the Greystone Heritage Trust. Members reviewed the reporting requirements and discussed the use of unrestricted donor funds and the Board's oversight responsibilities related to expenditures made under the Trust's terms of reference.

22. EDI Framework for Action Status Update

The Interim Provost provided an update on implementation of the EDI Framework for Action across the university. Discussion focused on progress against strategic priorities, levels of engagement across academic units, and approaches to advancing the work. Members noted that EDI principles continue to be integrated into institutional practices and discussed opportunities to maintain momentum while supporting a positive campus environment.

23. Research Chair in the Origins of Health & Disease

The Interim Provost presented the proposal to establish the Research Chair in the Origins of Health and Disease, supported by approximately $4 million in philanthropic funding. Members discussed the recruitment process and qualifications required for the role.

Motion: *That the Board of Governors approves the Hospitals of Regina Foundation Pediatrics Research Chair in the Origins of Health and Disease in the College of Medicine, effective June 24, 2026.*

24. KPMG Chair in Environmental, Social & Governance

The Board considered a proposal to establish the KPMG Chair in Environmental, Social and Governance. Management outlined the purpose and value of the position.

Motion: *That the Board of Governors approves the KPMG Enhancement Chair in Environmental, Social and Governance in the Edwards School of Business, effective June 24, 2026.*

25. Q4 Fundraising Totals

The Interim Vice-President University Relations presented fourth quarter fundraising results and highlighted overall fundraising performance. Members discussed ways to improve year-over-year reporting and requested additional narrative context to explain significant variances and trends in future reports.

Board Strategic Topics

Additional Topic: Strategic Planning Update (UPlan 2035)

The President provided an update on UPlan 2035 highlighting emerging themes identified through consultations, including the importance of community, institutional strengths, and the university's role in creating local impact with global influence. Members discussed the need for the strategic plan to clearly articulate the university's distinctive strengths, competitive advantages, and long-term aspirations.

Board members emphasized the importance of defining a compelling institutional purpose and ensuring that the plan reflects the university's commitment to student success, research impact, community service, and societal contribution. Members noted the importance of developing bold, accessible strategic goals that resonate with both internal and external audiences and reinforce the university's emerging "local to global" identity.

The Board expressed support for the direction of the planning process and encouraged continued engagement and refinement as development of UPlan 2035 continues.

26. Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA) Report

The Board participated in a strategic discussion regarding the HESA report and implications for the university's strategic planning process. Considerable discussion focused on defence-related opportunities emerging from federal priorities, the university's existing research strengths, and the importance of aligning future opportunities with institutional values and purpose.

27. Emerging Opportunities in Energy Sector

The President led a discussion regarding emerging opportunities within Saskatchewan's evolving energy sector. Members considered how the university could leverage its strengths in energy, nuclear research, critical minerals, and innovation while remaining aligned with institutional values. The Board emphasized the importance of maintaining flexibility, pursuing opportunities that support the university's mission, and continuing to communicate the university's contributions in areas such as energy and water security.

28. Agriculture and Innovation Corridor

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

Additional Topic: Water Security Update

The Vice-President Research provided an update on water security initiatives and opportunities, emphasizing the university's expertise and leadership in addressing water-related challenges. Discussion focused on the importance of water security to Saskatchewan, its connections to agriculture, sustainability, and community well-being, and the potential for increased collaboration and external engagement. Board members noted the strategic importance of the area and the value of supporting clear messaging and advocacy regarding the university's contributions to water security research and innovation.

In-Camera Session:

No additional motions were passed in the in-camera session.

Board Adjourned 11:50 a.m.