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We are pleased to present the Council report for January and February. During this time, the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) has been working on various initiatives to improve students' lives on campus and advocate for their needs.

### Advocacy

Advocacy is crucial in meeting students' academic and non-academic needs. At the USSU, we are committed to advocating for students at all levels of government and within the university community.

Our advocacy efforts extend to federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government, where we work to promote policies and initiatives that support the needs of our student population. We also engage with the university administration to advocate for improvements to academic programs, student services, and campus facilities.

Through our advocacy work, we aim to create a positive and supportive environment for all students at the University of Saskatchewan. By working with government and university partners, we can make meaningful progress towards meeting the needs of our students and improving their overall university experience.

If you are a student at the University of Saskatchewan and have concerns or issues that require advocacy support, please do not hesitate to contact the USSU. We are here to represent and support you in all aspects of your academic and non-academic life.

### USSU Provincial Lobby

This year we are putting forward advocacy policies to help students and support our province's growth plan. Saskatchewan's future is in the hands of post-secondary students. Supporting higher education in Saskatchewan is the greatest way to achieve impactful research, economic development, and dynamic employment sectors. All students in this province need a pathway to affordable and accessible education. We are presenting these recommendations to the Ministry of Advanced Education to encourage the prioritization of Advanced Education and for ongoing collaboration with Saskatchewan undergraduate students to address and alleviate systemic challenges. Investing in students means investing in Saskatchewan.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Eliminate Saskatchewan Student Loan Interests.

2. One-Year Student Loan Repayment Grace Period.
3. Increase Scholarships, Grants, and Bursaries for Indigenous and International Students.
4. Policies to Expand Reviews of Sexual Violence Preventative Measures at Post-Secondary Institutions Every Three Years.
5. Increased Support and Funding for Student Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Northern Communities.
6. Career Development.

### **Food insecurity Letter**

USSU has written a letter to the university administration urging them to address food insecurity on campus. And requesting them to provide financial support to students as they go through this challenging time of the year.

### **Student Wages Letter**

President Goswami wrote a letter to VP Finance and Resources Greg Fowler about the Student Wages Discrepancy across USask Campus with the following recommendations:

1. Student representation in the wages negotiation committee for student employees.
2. Conducting a cross-jurisdictional comparison of other university undergrad rates.
3. Add in the section that clarifies that the hiring manager has the authority to place within salary band 3 if the student is from a professional college or holds other education and experience that is required.
4. Creating transparent communication channels between USask employees and students regarding hiring practices, HR policies, and employee malpractices reporting portal.

Due to our collaboration efforts and communication, we were able to complete all of the recommendations.

### **Letter to the Minister of Advance Education**

President Goswami has written a letter to the Minister of Advance Education advocating for increased funding for post-secondary education in Saskatchewan. The letter highlights the importance of investing in education to ensure students have the resources they need to succeed.

## Prayer and Wellness Spaces on Campus

President Goswami submitted the letter in collaboration with Maria Haneef and Fiza Baloch to the Provost's Office and the University library. The letter highlighted the importance of campus wellness/ prayer spaces and how they relate to students' wellbeing. Due to the lack of prayer spaces on our campus, many students pray in hallways, between bookshelves in the library, or any available space. As a student leader, I strongly believe our campus's current situation does not match our commitments' standards. I am working with the Provost's Office to identify possible space and other necessary resources.

### **Concerns:**

1. Students require quiet and private spaces to perform their daily prayers and the current facility on campus is often inadequate, overcrowded, and inaccessible. This creates difficulties for students who have to leave their classes, offices or study spaces and travel to pray, causing them stress and distractions from their studies and other activities.
2. USask's standards to operate current prayer spaces on campus as compared to other U15 Universities.
3. The current Musallah is not well-furnished or equipped enough to handle the rapidly growing Muslim population on campus.

### **Recommendations:**

#### Short-term solutions:

1. A tour of the current prayer space on campus with the provost, appropriate representatives from the university, and the USSU president in Saskatchewan Hall 21.
2. A short-term renovation and minor fixtures to make the space more accessible.
3. Online presence of resources and prayer locations visible like other U15 Universities.
4. Considering Murray Library's current renovations and including a room/time dedicated to prayer.

#### Long-term solutions:

1. Identify other possible prayer and wellness spaces around the campus in the next three years. Specifically, in the libraries where students spend most of their time.
2. Consideration of prayer space and wellness spaces in the upcoming university renovations or new construction projects, including residences.

## Black History Month

The USSU provided significant financial support to PASA and other stakeholders in organizing events during Black History Month. This support enabled PASA to host a series of events, including panel discussions, workshops, and a gala. The financial resources, collaboration, and presence of USSU executives and the President helped

create a successful and meaningful celebration of Black history and culture on campus. Such initiatives contribute to developing an inclusive and supportive campus community, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **De-Stress**

The VP Miglani hosted another De-Stress initiative, the second edition of our rock climbing event, where we sponsor climbing orientations and encourage students to try rock climbing at the PAC, promoting the facilities and a healthy lifestyle.

### **Bike Work Stations**

The Bike workstations have been envisioned as a long-term project to enhance students' physical and mental well-being and serve as a new learning and de-stressing pathway. These workstations have been receiving great numbers daily, and their usage has increased exponentially. The USSU has three work bike stations, and after conversations with the library, they are looking into purchasing some for the main floor.

### **Academic Awareness Week**

VP Jacob organized an event called Academic Awareness Week, aimed at highlighting academic resources available to students and promoting academic success. The event was well-attended and provided an opportunity for students to learn about various academic support services and resources. One of the main highlights of the event was a quiz designed to gauge the academic experience of students across campus. The event also featured an experience-sharing session, where senior students shared their academic journey with the audience. This session was particularly helpful for first-year students who could benefit from the insights and advice of those who have successfully navigated their way through university.

Finally, the event concluded with a fun and interactive tie-and-dye activity, where students were able to engage in a creative and relaxing activity while networking with other students. Overall, the event was a great success and provided students with valuable insights and resources to help them succeed academically.

### **Centres**

The USSU Centres have been working hard to host individual weekly sessions like Gaymers Night, Lego and Let Go, Stitch and Bitch at the Pride Centre, Desi women's night, and panels at the Women's Centre. The Help Centre is hosting ASIST training with the university, and food hamper usage has been exceptionally high.

The Women's Centre hosted Pro-Choice Awareness Week in the first week of February. The event focused on delivering information via social media on pregnancy, abortion, and adoption. The centre also worked to increase the number of resources on pro-choice topics available both in the centre, online, and on Discord.

The Women's Centre also hosted the pro-choice awareness week tabling throughout the week, spreading awareness, and is now gearing up for International Women's Day. Pride Centre hosted a makeup workshop and is hosting sex week with three events.

### **Looking Forward**

The USSU is looking forward to several upcoming events, including the ChatGPT campaign, drag show, women in leadership, USSU elections, and sustainability week. They are also excited to announce the TEA Teaching Excellence Award, the Undergraduate Symposium, and the opening of new bike workstations and USSU Centres.

Sincere thank you from the USSU team. Kindly contact Abhineet Goswami at [president@ussu.ca](mailto:president@ussu.ca) or (306) 966-6965 for any questions or suggestions.

With respect,  
Abhineet Goswami, President  
Sharon Jacob, VP Academic Affairs  
Punya Miglani, VP Student Affairs