

**USask University Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday September 26, 2024**  
**2:30-4:30pm**  
**Convocation Hall and Zoom**

## **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:32 pm.

The Chair, Dr. Vicki Squires, began with a Land Acknowledgement.

No members of the media identified themselves.

The Chair reminded members there are no recordings of Council meetings.

### **1. Tribute**

Dr. Neil Hibbert, Department Head of Political Studies provided a tribute to Professor Emeritus John Courtney.

### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

#### **2.1 Adoption of the Agenda**

(Jones/Dobson): *That the agenda be approved as circulated.*

CARRIED

### **3. Chair's Opening Remarks**

Chair Squires welcomed everyone to the 30<sup>th</sup> year of University Council, noting the move of the meetings to Convocation Hall. The Chair communicated that the conversation at this month's President's Executive Committee focused on international student recruitment and admission and the negative impact the changes are having on retention and recruitment of international students.

The Chair noted that the Council Committee Chairs were also given the opportunity to speak with President Stoicheff regarding the Provost changes soon after the announcement was made, which was appreciated.

To conclude, Chair Squires noted that September 23-30th is USask's week of reflection leading up to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Vice-Provost Angela Jamie spoke on the activities taking place this week and the significance of the ribbon blankets hanging in Convocation Hall and around campus.

### **4. Minutes**

(Delbaere/Augusta): *That the minutes of June 13, 2024 be approved as circulated.*

CARRIED.

Abstentions: Orosz, Noppen, Hubbard Murdoch

## 5. Council Welcome and Governance Procedure Refresher

Julian Demkiw, University Secretary and Chief Governance Officer provided Council members with a brief refresher on University Council protocols and meeting modality.

## 6. Business Arising

### 6.1 Follow up on the Decline of Graduate International Student Success

Deputy Provost Patti McDougall explained that upon review, she was not clear of the question asked in June and if there are further questions on this matter to connect back to the Governance Office and Provost Office. Dr. McDougall noted how international students enrich our campus and province. USask is actively pursuing this topic and actions are underway.

A member commented that the Canadian government is denying entry visas to international graduate students. The Department of Linguistics accepted over 10 graduate students, and none of them received visas. How can this be handled given that almost all Linguistic graduate students are international?

Deputy Provost Dr. McDougall expressed that USask is continuing to push forward and use the contacts that we have. There is uncertainty if a systematic approach is being used but we are continuing to advocate in any way possible.

## 7. Reports

### 7.1 Report of the President

President Stoicheff welcomed new and continuing members and noted the impact Council has through campus in a good and meaningful way.

The President commented on the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) decisions regarding international students expressing that the U15 colleagues have tried to influence the decision by the IRCC and noted that it has been a very destructive decision. The President is confident that this university will see their way through as it always does.

President Stoicheff addressed the provost changes noting his conversations with the Council Committee Chairs and PPC. The President noted the extremely strong working relationship he and Airini had, stating the decision was not a performance-based issue; rather it was the best for timing given Airini was not wanting to seek a second term and his time remaining as President was approximately 16 months. President Stoicheff explained how Provost positions are extremely important and are being scrutinized across the country. Provost positions across the country are hard to fill or not staying filled due to the complexity and responsibilities in the portfolios. The positions themselves need to be evaluated. President Stoicheff is going to take the time remaining in his presidency to begin a review of the role and focus on modernization of the position. He felt it was his responsibility to do what was best for the institution and mentioned the introduction of a Chief Financial Officer to help relieve the provost portfolio of budgeting for the institution.

There were no questions.

## 7.2 Report of the Acting Provost

Acting Provost Bruni-Bossio thanked all those involved in assisting him through his first nine days in the role. He expressed to members that relationships are the cornerstone of leadership and noted the work he has undertaken both inside and out of governance and understands the importance of voices across campus. Dr. Bruni-Bossio mentioned how he intends to engage the voices of those who report to the provost and those impacted by the Provost Office such as University Council. The Acting Provost concluded that he believes we are a great university doing great work and wants to continue that work.

There were no questions.

## 7.3 Report of the GSA President

President David Ohene-Amoako reported on the activities taking place in the GSA including work on the budget and changes to the GSA logo that will officially launch in November.

The full report is in the agenda package.

A member asked where the money for GSA bursaries comes from. President Ohene-Amoako replied that CGPS and GSA contribute to the funds and some of that money comes from student fees.

## 7.4 Report of the USSU President

President Krunal Chavda reported that students are feeling the strain of rising costs and looking for more supports academically, financially and socially. President Chavda noted that community is built by intention and that is the work USSU is doing. The executive is developing a 5-year strategic plan so the commitment to students continues as the executive changes. President Chavda closed his report by noting the important work of the community centers.

The full report is in the agenda package.

There were no questions.

## 8. Executive Committee

Secretary Demkiw gave a brief update to Council on the four new members elected on September 20<sup>th</sup> to fill the vacant member-at-large positions.

## 9. Academic Programs Committee (APC)

Dr. Carolyn Augusta, Chair of the Academic Programs Committee presented the committee's item.

### 9.1 Request for Decision: Termination of Post-Degree Certificate in Career and Guidance Studies

The full proposal is in the package.

- The Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education deemed this certificate program no longer viable for a few reasons:
  - It does not focus on an area of study in which there is a demand for **career** counsellors in the Kindergarten to grade 12 and post-secondary school systems. These positions and counselling departments have been eliminated.
  - This program did not generate enough interest to fill courses when they were offered, and enough revenue to cover the expense of running it.
- None of the courses associated with this program are being deleted and there are no current students in this program.

There were no questions.

Motion: (Augusta/Jones) *It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the termination of the Post-Degree Certificate in Career and Guidance Studies effective May 2025.*

CARRIED.

## 10. Nominations Committee

Scott Bell, Chair of the Nominations Committee presented the committee's items.

### 10.1 Request for Decision: Council and Council Committee Vacancies

There were no questions.

The Chair called for Nominations from the floor.

Motion (Bell/ Fotouhi): *It is recommended by the Nominations Committee that Council approve the nominations described in the attached report, effective September 26, 2024.*

CARRIED

### 10.2 Request for Decision: Senior Administration Review Committees

There were no questions.

The Chair called for Nominations from the floor.

Motion (Bell/Fotouhi): *It is recommended by the Nominations Committee that Council approve the nominations for the review committees of senior administrators as described in the attached report, effective September 26, 2024.*

CARRIED

Abstention: Freywald

### 10.3 Request for Decision: Renewals and Tenure Appeal Committees

There were no questions.

The Chair called for Nominations from the floor.

Motion (Bell/Fotouhi): *It is recommended by the Nominations Committee that Council approve the nominations for the Renewals and Tenure Appeal Committee as described in the attached report, effective September 26, 2024.*

CARRIED

## 11. Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships

Dr. Scott Walsworth, Chair of the Joint Committee on Charis and Professorships presented the committee's items.

### 11.1 Request for Decision: Limited Term Enhancement Chair in Swine Health

Dr. Walsworth presented the item. The Chair is intended for an internal candidate.

Motion: (Walsworth/Wotherspoon): *It is recommended by the Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships that University Council approve the Limited Term Enhancement Chair in Swine Health in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine.*

CARRIED

Abstention: Freywald

### 11.2 Item for Information: Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships Annual Report 2023-24

Dr. Walsworth highlighted the report attached to the agenda package.

## 12. Other business

There was no other business.

## 13. Question period

Pre-submitted Questions:

**How is the lobbying going to convince NSERC to make scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships available to international students? More generally, what is USask doing to increase funding to graduate students?**

Dean Burshtyn responded that there is a [strategic report](#) for graduate student funding and within the report is a commitment to student mobility and to have funding for international students. With the support of the VPR, Dean Burshtyn is requesting an increase to the base funding to the graduate student scholarship program to enable increases to the financial supports provided to students and when feasible seek CGPS Faculty Council's approval to increase the minimum guaranteed funding for all PhD students.

**When will exam scheduling be a part of the course build?**

Deputy Provost Dr. McDougall responded that scheduling exams in the course build would require students to take it upon themselves to ensure they do not have exam conflicts when scheduling their classes. This approach to exam scheduling would require USask to expand out the exam timeline even further. USask currently can wait until add/drop deadline before scheduling exams with an accelerated delivery of the exam schedule.

**What is being done to fix full classes that students need when students go to register? (Class registration shouldn't be a race.)**

Deputy Provost McDougall responded that this would be a college level question and should be raised at the college; noting that USask is exploring a waitlisting functionality on full classes which could help with this issue. Dr. McDougall also noted the significant innovation within Arts and Science of a student applying into a major which will substantially help the college with planning courses and demand.

**In the last four months travel claim expense reimbursements for my students have been taking more than 30 days for processing and approval, with action only happening in numerous cases when I or the student inquires about the delay. This is an unacceptably long time to wait, particularly for students. I would like to know what the reasons for the long processing times are and how the University intends to solve this issue prior to next summers fieldwork season.**

Greg Fowler, Vice President Administration and COO responded that staffing levels and adequate funding are low in comparison to the high volume of claims. Currently working at 14 days for reimbursement and have asked for another position to get to the 4-day goal.

**A member of the affiliated colleges sought guidance on how graduate students can regain access to traditional services like insurance, transit support, accessibility & equity, and library services. After the pandemic, the affiliate status led to removal from the USask NSID platform, impacting their students. Given the longstanding relationship with USask, and lack of formal MOAs, but have a century-old connection affected by this technological shift. The hope is that these services can be reinstated as they design support plans per the Ministry of Advanced Education guidelines. The Perrin Report, of 2018, was intended to enliven the relations with USask and its Affiliates and are hopeful this may be one resource to help expedite this challenge.**

Greg Fowler, Vice President Administration and COO thanked the member for their question and noted he will have a conversation with the Provost Office on this matter.

**A member inquired about the requirement for indigenous learning in many programs where students are now required to take indigenous studies courses that are only offered through Arts and Sciences. There has not been any additional support or resources provided to offer extra courses across USask. Indigenous Studies Courses are overflowing and the department is struggling.**

Acting Provost Bruni-Bossio is going to take this item away and will report back to Council.

#### **14. Adjournment**

(Dobson): The meeting was properly adjourned at 4:13 pm.