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## University Council June Report

June is a powerful month. Not only does it reflect a period of strength for the voices of 2SLGBTQQIA+ Peoples, June is a time to honour and celebrate, as well as uplift Indigenous Peoples, voices, histories, and experiences. June is National Indigenous History Month, with June 21st being National Indigenous Peoples Day. June is also Pride Month. Collectively, these times of recognition, celebration, and solidarity are calls to action to demand and work together towards equity, as well as empower future generations of change makers. When we come together as not only allies but as accomplices, when we do the work of changing systems and structures together, that is community, collaboration, and connection.

Now that it is June, our USSU Executive Team, Vice President Operations and Finance Owen Deis, Vice President Academic Affairs Norah Jacob, Vice President Student Affairs Emily Hubick, and myself have been working together for just over a month! From meetings to events, to University Convocation, Stakeholder Meetings, celebrations, student discussions, and student advocacy, as well as ongoing conversations regarding Indigenous student initiatives, equity, diversity, inclusion, justice, accessibility, and belonging remain forefront throughout the daily work of the USSU. Our executive team has been working hard to update USSU policies, bylaw, and develop initiatives for the year ahead. Our Senior Manager team has been instrumental in supporting our curiosity as we develop plans for student engagement, advocacy, and community. This has been particularly impactful as our executive team has been updating the Campus Club Handbook, the Academic Integrity Handbook, and the University Student Council Handbook to reflect the values and visions of the year ahead. Additionally, the support of USSU staff and team members has aided in our planning for Welcome Week.

Finally, for many USask Students who are finishing their degrees, June is also a time of celebration and accomplishment! Our executive team and I were fortunate to attend several of the Spring Convocation Ceremonies. It is truly empowering to see students embark on the next steps of their journey as learners, leaders, innovators, and community members.

Ultimately, on behalf of the 2025-2026 USSU executive team, we continue to work with all levels of the University of Saskatchewan to uplift, advocate alongside, and improve student experiences and opportunities. We thank University Council for this opportunity to share and provide updates on the work that the USSU is doing, and to reaffirm our ongoing partnership with the university community broadly.

*Reflections from VP Deis (he/him)*



“My first month as VP Operations & Finance saw me resolve many disbursement requests for the 2024-25 academic year, which came at the end of my predecessor’s term. I completed the remaining fourteen approvals, denying an additional two due to insufficient documents and failure to meet funding deadlines. As a result, all disbursements for the 2024-25 year are complete, and the USSU’s April books are now closed.

Six campus groups have completed their ratifications, and most of them are hosting events during the summer months. As part of our commitment to support these and other groups, the USSU has undertaken policy rewrites to enable easier navigation. This includes standardising disciplinary measures, resolving inconsistencies, and replacing outdated terminology. We hope that, with these changes, our campus groups will remain as vibrant and enthusiastic as they are currently. The USSU is working to revitalise its Campus Club Space located on the second floor of Place Riel. A bookable space for our campus groups, the room has seen declining use in recent years. To rectify this, the USSU is introducing a TV and media cart, as well as streamlining the booking process, which will enable more groups to utilise it as the only USSU space dedicated to clubs.

As for Transit, little took place on our side in May. Despite this, several updates and construction projects were announced or are pending announcement. The most impactful of these updates is the closure of Broadway Bridge for overdue repairs. Construction started on May 12th, complemented by a second Broadway project that began on May 27th, with the intersection of Broadway Avenue and 12th Street closed to facilitate the construction of Link platforms. There are forthcoming changes to several routes which the city will announce at the end of June.

Additionally, regarding Transit, I am closely monitoring updates to the Link system, particularly in light of alleged safety concerns, such as the addition of street-level crossings and

the removal of the pedestrian overpass. The Standing Policy Committee on Transportation postponed consideration of changes to the College Drive portion of Link until June City Council deliberations. I will keep an eye on updates as they become available.

Apart from my commitments to campus groups and Transit, I am looking forward to helping plan Welcome Week and other outreach initiatives. I am extremely excited to meet new and returning students, and welcome suggestions to bolster our engagement with our members.”

*Reflections from VP Jacob (she/her)*



“The first month of my term as Vice President Academic Affairs has been marked by a high volume of student inquiries, ongoing casework, and early-stage planning for key advocacy projects. May has been a transitional month not only for the incoming USSU executive committee, but also for the broader academic landscape, with final grades released, deferred exams administered, and summer courses beginning. The USSU Academic Advocacy Office remains active in supporting undergraduate students through a wide range of academic challenges and concerns.

Since the start of my term, the Academic Advocacy Office has worked on thirty-six student cases involving academic appeals, misconduct allegations, grade disputes, exam-related issues, and procedural misunderstandings. These cases have included both urgent matters requiring immediate intervention as well as longer-term concerns regarding ongoing processes. Misconduct allegations, particularly those related to the use of generative AI, have remained a common theme throughout the month. Many students report confusion around what constitutes permitted usage of tools like Grammarly, especially when they are too afraid to ask for clarification.

While much of this work is necessarily reactive, it continues to inform broader advocacy efforts. There have been multiple conversations with offices around campus such as Student Affairs and Outreach, the International Student and Study Abroad Centre, and college undergraduate offices. These meetings have been vital to improving communication and streamlining student support across academic processes. These partnerships remain essential to ensuring that students receive timely, clear, and consistent guidance.

In response, the USSU has begun identifying common concerns and reviewing policies to best support students facing academic integrity allegations. Case trends continue to reflect the need for clearer communication, greater consistency in procedural timelines, and a broader student understanding of how to navigate the academic system. Importantly, the office approached all student concerns with confidentiality, care, and a commitment to ensuring that students are empowered to make informed decisions.

A key issue initiative that has emerged from these conversations is a review of the language used in student communication materials. Many policies rely heavily on policy jargon or legalistic language that students often find intimidating or difficult to interpret. The USSU is advocating for the use of more student-friendly formats and inclusive language.

In preparation for the Fall Term, I have created a revised draft of the USSU Academic Handbook, which includes information on academic integrity, the appeals process, and the university's policy on generative AI. The handbook aims to empower students with accessible and clear information. Once finalized and printed, it will be made available to students online and distributed across campus.

Planning is also underway for Academic Integrity Week, scheduled for the second week of September. This weeklong event aims to proactively educate students about their rights and responsibilities within the academic system. Programming will include sessions on navigating appeals and misconduct procedures, understanding university policy, and accessing academic support. The USSU hopes to collaborate with multiple offices and departments to provide a comprehensive, student-centred, and educational event.

In addition to advocacy and outreach, I have been participating on several university committees, including the Academic Programs Committee, the Teaching, Learning, and Academic Resources Committee, and the Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Works Committee. These meetings have offered valuable insight into ongoing discussions around course design, responsible AI usage, and various other academic processes. Throughout the year, the USSU will continue to engage in these conversations and advocate for decisions that reflect the needs and experiences of students.

Participation on these committees highlights the importance of sustained student representation in academic governance. As policies and curriculums evolve, especially in response to technological change and emerging educational needs, student perspectives offer insight into how decisions translate into lived experiences.

Looking ahead, the summer months will be used to finalize preparations for the Fall Term, including onboarding volunteers and establishing relationships with various faculty and

staff across campus. The quieter academic period provides valuable time to reflect on the first month of casework, identify patterns in student concerns, and develop strategies to enhance the effectiveness of academic advocacy moving forward. It also offers space to lay the foundation for long-term goals, including improvements in outreach, student awareness, and cross-campus collaboration.

The USSU remains committed to creating an academic environment where student voices are respected, policies are transparent, and support systems are accessible. I would like to thank all faculty, Council members, and university staff who have already extended their collaboration and support to this work. I look forward to continuing to engage across committees, colleges, and departments in service of a more equitable and student-informed academic culture at the University of Saskatchewan.”

*Reflections from VP Hubick (she/her)*



“As the USSU concludes our first official month in office, I have been developing a forward-looking plan focused on events and initiatives that align with our goals. A key priority during this has been establishing strong working relationships with members of the university and local community. To that end, I have been organizing introductory meetings with staff from various departments with whom I will be collaborating throughout the year.

This month also presented a valuable opportunity for professional development through the StudentCare Stakeholder Conference in Montreal. This brought together student union representatives from universities and colleges across Canada and featured sessions such as Spokesperson Training and Successful Negotiations. President Wintermute and I found these sessions to be incredibly insightful, equipping us with practical tools to better navigate our roles. The conference also allowed us to connect with student leaders from other institutions, fostering the exchange of ideas and best practices that we are excited to bring back to the USSU.

Looking ahead, June promises to be an exciting and productive month. I am turning my attention to initiatives and improvements I proposed during the election period, with the goal of developing concrete plans for the summer and fall terms. Planning is underway for major events such as Welcome Week. Additionally, I have been working closely with our Women’s Centre Coordinator to explore ways to enhance programming for Sexual Violence Awareness Week.”

*Reflections from President Wintermute (she/her)*



Although there are many ways to show up and support initiatives for Indigenous History Month and Pride Month, there are several events taking place in the Saskatoon area throughout the month that I would like to draw attention towards. On May 30th at Nobel Plaza here on campus we raised the Two-Spirit and Intersex-Inclusive Progressive Pride Flags and celebrated and brought awareness to the importance of pride through engagements with speakers, guests, and members of the community. The USSU Pride Centre Coordinator, Wren Dahl spoke on behalf of students capturing the intersectional messages of Pride month. It is important to remember that Pride is something that is both personal, and political. Pride emerged as a riot, and a means of social advocacy started by Black trans women. This history must not be forgotten or silenced. On June 13th here on campus is the Glitter and Glam Event. On June 15th there is a Rainbow Run in support of Pride. On June 20th, the Rock your Roots Walk for Reconciliation is taking place. From June 20th-22nd Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) invites 2SLGBTQIA+ Métis youth and allied MN-S citizens to a youth wellness retreat. On June 21st, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Wanuskewin is hosting a series of activities. And on June 22nd is the Saskatoon Pride Parade. On behalf of the USSU, I encourage members of University Council and the USask community to consider attending some of these initiatives and sharing any additional information regarding events.

Since the last University Council meeting, I have been busy with Pride initiatives organized by the USSU, as well as supporting in my capacity as a member of the Pride Planning Committee, the events and activities going on here at USask. On June 7th, the USSU will attend Prince Albert Pride. In addition to sharing our Pride for students of Prince Albert University of



Saskatchewan Campus, the USSU Pride Centre is working to enhance and mobilize intersectional pride and 2SLGBTQIA+ initiatives and engagement.

The USSU is beginning to share in early conversations about how student advocacy and connection can be better bridged between and amongst USask campus locations. Students attending USask Prince Albert Campus frequently feel isolated from the broader USask community, particularly from student life outside of the cohort of students who attend on-site in PA. However, there are many students who are members of our USask satellite campuses, and all of these students deserve to be and feel a part of the university student experience. Therefore, it is the intention of the USSU to strengthen our connection and relationship with Prince Albert Campus, and we are beginning to schedule early meetings with Jay Wilson, Cindy Koob, and Rob Procyk, as well as other members of the Prince Albert Campus team.

On May 20th, the USSU successfully hosted our annual retreat. We embraced the rainy weather and had a wonderful afternoon of team bonding and activities. Building connections and collaboration is necessary to the wellbeing of our executive and administrative teams and is an ongoing initiative within the USSU. In order to foster this connection, safe and accountable space making is a necessary step. In light of comments made by a University of Saskatchewan Faculty member and a former University of Saskatchewan President, the USSU executive team alongside our Senior Managers have continued to have ongoing dialogue regarding anti-racist, anti-oppressive education, and unconscious biases. We have reached out to leaders who are doing work and consultation on inclusion and diversity work to help provide ongoing education to our team. However, this is only an initial step towards our commitments to greater accountability within the USSU to anti-oppressive work.

Near the end of May, VP Hubick and I attended the Studentcare/Alumo Stakeholder Meeting in Montréal. Here, we were able to meet with student leaders across Canada and communicate with executive teams composed of diverse governance structures working to enact various platforms of advocacy. This event provided our team with the opportunity to learn about student health and dental coverage and the various policies and care that are covered. In addition to the Stakeholders Meeting providing deeper insight into the ways in which students access and utilize student health and dental coverage, attendees were also able to access other professional development training. These working sessions helped to provide executives across the country with useful tools to navigate our unique positions as student leaders.

Some of the most raised topics at the Studentcare/Alumo Stakeholders Meeting were regarding Gender Affirming Care, Accessibility, Mental Health, Housing, and Affordability. VP Hubick and myself both led working groups and discussions on topics of Gender Affirming Care and Accessibility. We presented our findings and insight to the broader executive groups in attendance and Studentcare/Alumo staff and organizers. These topics in addition to mental

health, housing, and affordability are all at the forefront of our work as executive members and will be central to our advocacy throughout the 2025-2026 year.

Regarding Gender Affirming Care specifically, I would like to bring attention to the increased barriers present for people who require access. Gender Affirming Care is not optional. Gender Affirming Care is health care, and is necessary and life saving care. Additionally, Gender Affirming Care is not strictly limited to surgical procedures, it encompasses any and all care that affirms someone's gender, gender identity, or gender expression. Although procedures like top surgery are covered within the Province of Saskatchewan, the reattachment of nipples is not covered. While various Hormone Replacement Therapies (HRT) are generally covered by all health plans, necessary materials in order to carry out HRT such as needles are not. I strongly encourage that members of University Council seek out resources such as the Saskatchewan Trans Health Coalition's *Saskatchewan Medical Transition Guide* (<https://www.transsask.ca/accessing-affirming-healthcare/>). USask Students should be able to access coverage for aspects of Gender Affirming Care that are not covered by the province. This is an initiative that the USSU is intending to bring to our membership. Two-Spirit, trans, non-binary, and gender queer people should be supported at every turn to ensure access to life saving and life necessary care. This requires education for the broader community as well as engagement.

Now more than ever, as our political, social, and cultural landscapes encourage hostility and fear, commitments to advocating with and alongside Two-Spirit, trans, non-binary, and gender diverse peoples are vital. In Saskatchewan, trans, non-binary, and gender-creative kids continue to be targeted through policies like Bill 137, the *Parents' Bill of Rights*, which prevents children under the age of 16 from using their chosen name and pronouns without the consent of parents. This puts the safety of trans, non-binary, and gender-creative children at risk, and is also fundamentally changing how educators and education students engage with and learn about topics of inclusion and diversity. Therefore, it is the role of student advocacy and the voice of leadership within the university to speak out against transphobic policies like Bill 137 that are directly limiting the possibilities and potential of young students, the same students who will one day become our future innovators, builders, and changemakers.

Within my portfolio, I have continued to attend and work within my respective committees. The Governance Committee concluded its meetings for the year and will resume in September. I am grateful to the Governance Committee for welcoming me late in the year following my election and for supporting my onboarding and transition. Additionally, I attended my first Campus Legal Services Meeting. I believe that the engagement and opportunities for students to facilitate student legal support alongside the supervision of licensed lawyers is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen student relations and accessibility into legal spaces. Furthermore, I believe that it is important that students are able to utilize accessible legal

support. I am looking forward to the ongoing work of the committee and the discussions to come.

Within the realm of USSU specific committees and working groups, I am beginning to brainstorm methods of engagement for our various USSU committees. I am a member of the Indigenous Student Advisory Committee, the Student Governance Committee, and the Student Advocacy Committee. Ensuring active and meaningful participation and work of these committees throughout the academic year will be vital to platforms of student advocacy and student initiatives across campus. It is important to empower students through USSU student committees to make governance work and student leadership increasingly accessible. Student voices are able to support mobilization and transformation; thus, commitment to student advocacy is necessary to cultivate and support as it ensures that institutional spaces remain accountable.

The USSU executive team was grateful to have met with Knowledge Keeper, Joseph Naytowhow to listen and learn from his teachings, wisdom, and guidance regarding community, collaboration, and connection. These messages are profoundly important to the USSU and they will intentionally guide the kind of work that we wish to do, as well as help us to create stronger relationships across campus. Additionally, the USSU executive team has begun various tours with different services on campus. Recently, we met with the USSU Childcare Centres and were able to ask questions about the services and accessibility of childcare. In the month of June we will be meeting with Student Wellness, Protective Services, International Student and Study Abroad Centre, as well as Student Central, and Access and Equity Services. These meetings will offer opportunities to discuss our questions regarding the roles of various student services on campus.

Additionally, I was fortunate to volunteer at the College of Arts and Science UStart Orientation program on May 31st. Here, I was able to support incoming students and parents with questions about registration, course selection, and other resources and programs offered on campus. In my first two years of university, I was an Arts and Science Student Ambassador, where I learned to help students navigate various aspects of the student experience. It was particularly impactful to be able to return to support the UStart program in my position as USSU President. I believe that it is important to share through the lens of students with incoming students pieces of university life. At UStart, I spoke on a panel alongside other Arts and Science Students where we shared insight into campus clubs and community centres, as well as various support services offered through the university. One of my favourite roles as a student mentor and advocate is to help incoming and first year students settle into university. Easing the stress and anxiety as well as uncertainty of entering university I believe is one of the most important roles as mentors that senior students can provide.

While many students are coming to USask for the first time and joining the student community, for many other USask students, June is a time of celebration and transition as Convocation Ceremonies begin. The USSU is looking forward to attending multiple Convocation Ceremonies to cheer on and support students as they cross the stage to receive their degrees! A quote that always resonates with me around graduation season is “Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that leads others to join you.” On behalf of the USSU, we hope that graduating students will continue to advocate for changes in our world that they wish to see, especially in a way that is both collaborative and community oriented.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge those impacted by the wildfires and the active evacuations across northern Saskatchewan. There are various ways to support Saskatchewan Evacuees. Spaces like Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI), Reclaim MBK, and Quality Inn are accepting donations for some of the most needed items. These items include: new or gently used summer clothing, shoes, swimsuits, new and used toys, colouring books, crayons, and pencil crayons, strollers, and wheelchairs. Please consider donating if you are able to.

*Reflections from USSU Pride Centre Coordinator (he/they)*



“In May our new Pride Centre coordinator, Wren Dahl, officially started in his role. They will work in this role for a year, until April 30, 2026.

The Pride Centre continues to be a space for students during the summer months. Some of them come into the Centre to socialize, work on projects, or eat lunch in between summer term classes, while others make a special trip to campus to socialize and enjoy the safe space that the Centre provides.

In May, the Pride Centre was preparing for Pride Month celebrations. This year, the Pride Centre is participating in both the Saskatoon and Prince Albert Pride Parades. They also took part in the University of Saskatchewan flag raising ceremony on Friday May 30, and will be involved in the University's pancake breakfast before the Saskatoon Pride Parade on June 22. Finally, a partnership with the University Library, the Neil Richards Archival Collection, and the USSU has allowed for a Pride gala titled “Glitter & Glam: A Prom of Possibilities” to take place on Friday June 13, highlighting the Neil Richards archive, queer histories, and the work of Donald Meriam, a Two-spirit activist from North Battleford.”

On behalf of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union and our 2025-2026 Executive Team, VP Deis, VP Jacob, VP Hubick, and myself, we are thankful for the opportunity to present our June Report to University Council. Please stay safe over the summer months, and continue to engage and take part in various community spaces and initiatives. We are looking forward to the year ahead and to returning to University Council in September ready to welcome back returning students, as well as celebrate the arrival of new students to our USask community!



Respectfully submitted,

Emma Wintermute

President

University of Saskatchewan Students' Union

Pronouns: She/Her



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and the Homeland of the Métis