

MINUTES

University Council

Date: January 29, 2026

Time: 2:30–4:30 pm

Location: Convocation Hall (PMB 120) and Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 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 unauthorized recordings of Council meetings.

1. Tribute

A tribute was provided for Professor Emeritus Andrew (Andy) Carson from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Arts and Science by Doug MacLean, retired Associate Professor Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Arts and Science. Council observed a moment of silence.

2. Agenda

Motion: (FitzGerald / Deters): That the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

3. Chair's Opening Remarks

Dr. Vicki Squires, Council Chair, College of Education, welcomed members to the new year and welcomed Dr. Bruni-Bossio to his role as president. She indicated that she looked forward to working together. She thanked the Governance Office for hosting an open house about University Council and reiterated the importance of participating on and engaging in Council committees.

She concluded by saying that there is a lot going on in the world and close to home, and that the university needs to focus on how we can work to make the world a better place.

4. Minutes

Motion: (Jones / Willenborg): That the minutes of December 18, 2025 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

5. Academic Programs Committee

Paul Jones, Chair of the Academic Programs Committee, presented the committee's items as outlined in the agenda package.

5.1. Request for Decision: Diploma in Educational Studies

The full report is in the agenda package. This diploma is being offered as an off-ramp for students who are unable to complete the Bachelor's degree. It does not lead to a teaching license in Saskatchewan, but may in other jurisdictions.

Motion: (Jones / Dobson): It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the Diploma in Educational Studies, effective May 2026.

CARRIED

5.2. Request for Decision: Certificate in Foundational Pathways in Arts and Science

The full report is in the agenda package. This certificate is composed of 24 credit units of introductory courses and is intended for those who do not complete a full Bachelor's degree. The breadth of applicable courses means the certificate will be offered at both of our campuses and through various flexible learning options.

Motion: (Jones / Dobson): It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the Certificate in Foundational Pathways in Arts and Science, effective May 2026.

CARRIED

5.3. Request for Decision: Master of Science in Periodontology Program

The full report is in the agenda package. This program is intended to provide advanced graduate training in periodontology to address the province's aging population and rising oral health care demands.

Motion: (Jones / Dobson): It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the Master of Science Periodontology Program, for inclusion in the 2026-27 Catalogue with first student intake in Fall 2027.

CARRIED

5.4. Request for Decision: Doctor of Pharmacy Admission Qualification Changes

The full report is in the agenda package. The proposal is to add three credit units in Indigenous learning – this is in line with the college goals and accreditation standards.

Motion: (Jones / Dobson): It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the Doctor of Pharmacy Admission Qualification change, effective for the 2027-2028 admission cycle.

CARRIED

5.5. Request for Decision: PhD in Nursing Admission Qualification Changes

The full report is in the agenda package.

Motion: (Jones / Dobson): It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Admission Qualification change, effective for the 2027-2028 admission cycle.

CARRIED

Abstention: Vandenberg

5.6. Request for Decision: PhD in Public Policy Admission Qualification Changes

The full report is in the agenda package. The proposal is intended to add flexibility to the requirements surrounding the personal statement to ensure applications can better demonstrate their research interests.

Motion: (Jones / Dobson): It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy Admission Qualification change, effective for the 2027-2028 admission cycle.

CARRIED

5.7. Notice of Motion: New Assessment and Course Delivery Policies and Procedures

Dr. Jones provided notice that at the next meeting of University Council the following motion would be put forward: *It is recommended by the Academic Programs Committee that Council approve the new Assessment and Course Delivery Policies and Procedures effective Fall 2027.* The full report for this item is in the agenda package.

Dr. Jones said that extensive documentation has been provided and versions of it have been circulated and discussed for some time. Some of the changes include: separating the Academic Courses Policy into four different documents, better enabling competency-based assessment, a switch to a default of two-hour final exams, and better facilitating a wider variety of assessment opportunities to grant instructors more autonomy.

A member asked about the possibility of adding the word “normally” into section 6.2.3 of the procedures document to allow for flexibility in the final exam scheduling, especially for common final exams with evening and day sections. Salomé Ries, Acting University Registrar, thanked the member and indicated that change could be made.

A member asked if the university had considered implementing an honour code, as studies have shown that they reduce instances of misconduct. Dr. Nancy Turner, Interim Associate Provost, Teaching Innovation and Strategic Initiatives, said that work was also ongoing on the student misconduct regulations, and that this might fit more appropriately there. The university administration was working with student leadership and learnings from other institutions as to how the principles of an honour code might be implemented.

A member asked for more information about the switch to a default exam of two hours and asked about the administration of this if a three-hour exam was requested. Dr. Turner said that the new policy and procedures would only come into effect in fall 2027 to have more time to socialize and operationalize the changes, saying change management was very important. When requesting an exam for a course, this process would also be made very clear about the duration of the exam requested.

A member raised a concern about the shift towards two-hour exams, saying that in certain departments, such as English, they were weighting the finals more greatly due to the rise of large language models. Having all of the three-hour exams at the end would disincentivize these exams, even when there was a strong pedagogical reason for doing so. Dr. Turner said that ideally adding greater flexibility in exam types and having two-hour exam blocks would assist in lessening the need to push exams so late, especially in the fall term. Dr. Marjorie Delbaere, Interim Vice-Provost Students and Learning, said that they could reconsider the manner of scheduling the three-hour exams.

A member asked about the possibility of extending the grounds for accommodation beyond just Huskie athletes to other student athletes. Dr. Turner indicated that this was beyond the scope of the documents before Council.

6. Governance Committee

Dr. Susan Detmer, Chair of the Governance Committee, presented the committee’s items as outlined in the agenda package.

6.1. Request for Decision: College of Nursing Faculty Bylaws

The full report is in the agenda package. Dr. Detmer indicated that notice had already been provided and no questions or concerns were raised since that time.

Motion: (Detmer / Sarjeant-Jenkins): It is recommended by the Governance Committee that Council approve the changes to the College of Nursing Faculty Council Bylaws, effective immediately.

CARRIED
Abstentions: Luimes; Compton

6.2. Request for Decision: College of Agriculture and Bioresources Faculty Bylaws

The full report is in the agenda package. Dr. Detmer indicated that notice had already been provided and no questions or concerns were raised since that time.

Motion: (Detmer / Sarjeant-Jenkins): It is recommended by the Governance Committee that Council approve the changes to the College of Agriculture and Bioresources Faculty Council Bylaws, effective immediately.

CARRIED

6.3. Request for Decision: Council Bylaws

The full report is in the agenda package. Dr. Detmer indicated that notice had already been provided and questions had been raised, and she invited Dr. Chris Willenborg, Chair of the Planning and Priorities Committee, to address them.

The first question was about why voting authority was separated from financial authority. Dr. Willenborg indicated that previously, the person with financial authority responsible for the budget did have voting authority, but this was changed not by the committee but by an administrative decision to introduce the position of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The change in front of Council is responding to that administrative change.

The second question was about how this proposal fits within the broader context of governance at the university. Dr. Willenborg indicated that he does not believe this is a move away from collegial, faculty-led governance. The CFO is a key member of the executive of PPC and of the committee more broadly, and this change reflects this.

The third question was about quorum and conflict of interest. There are 11 faculty members on the committee and – if this went through – there would be six voting administrators. The committee has special quorum requirements for the faculty members, and if there was ever a smaller number of faculty at a meeting, an item could be deferred.

Chair Squires added that PPC does not have voting responsibility for financial matters, and that this is vested with the Board of Governors. PPC recommends on financial matters.

A member asked how often recusals happen and how they are documented. Dr. Willenborg indicated that PPC has very few substantive votes and that any conflicts are noted in the minutes.

A member asked what the benefit of this change was. Dr. Willenborg said that the change will enable someone who is a major contributor to the committee and the institution to have a vote on a committee relevant to their work.

A member asked about how the president is an *ex officio* member of the committee and does not vote. Dr. Demkiw, University Secretary and Chief Governance Officer, indicated that '*ex officio*' refers to the manner by which someone has a position, but does not have anything to do with voting rights.

A member requested to make an amendment. The Chair said that due to the limited nature of the motion before Council – switching from having someone as non-voting to voting – that any amendments would have to be limited to this, and that there was not a lot of room to make changes within this limited scope.

Motion: (Detmer / Sarjeant-Jenkins): It is recommended by the Governance Committee that Council approve the changes to *the Council Bylaws and Regulations* to change the voting membership of the Planning and Priorities Committee, effective immediately.

CARRIED

7. Reports

7.1. President

President Bruni-Bossio thanked Council and said that his priority in the early stages of his presidency was to listen. He wanted to earn the trust of Council and of faculty. Given the state of the world and the rate of change, the way that we can find a constant is to understand our collective identity. We need to tap into our collective strengths to demonstrate the university's value and impact.

He provided an overview of the process for generating a new strategic plan for the university. The first step is to generate ideas both internally to campus and across the province. The second is to refine ideas with a USask Strategy Day in May and through advisory groups. The final step is to validate ideas, and this will conclude with approval through the university's governing bodies.

He concluded by saying that he is honoured to be serving in this role and that he believes in this university and its people.

7.2. Interim Provost and Vice-President Academic

Interim Provost Patti McDougall spoke to highlights in her report. Oversight of museums, galleries, and collections will move under the purview of the University Library on May 1 to have a unified approach to cultural heritage resource management. She also spoke to the ongoing work around strategic enrolment management, especially in light of changes to our student population. This work is currently being done by colleges on program-specific projections.

She concluded by recognizing the important work of Council. At this meeting alone, new pathways for enrolment and new credentials were made that will be transformational for future learners.

7.3. Graduate Students Association (GSA)

GSA President Palash Roy offered a report that spoke to engagement efforts underway with graduate students. He also said that due to high usage, they were anticipating increases to the costs of the health and dental plan. Additionally, they were working on childcare issues thanks to funding received from the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for doing a business plan in this area.

He concluded by encouraging Council members to support their Iranian students and colleagues during the disastrous upheaval happening in their country.

A member echoed the importance of supporting Iranian students and mentioned the International Student and Study Abroad Centre offered excellent resources for support.

7.4. University of Saskatchewan Student's Union (USSU)

USSU President Emma Wintermute began by echoing the thoughts of the GSA – with all of the upheaval happening abroad, it is important to support students who are facing unprecedented difficulties.

She indicated that key priorities for the USSU would be advocacy on sexual violence prevention and revisions to university policy, greater accessibility and sustainability, and engaging with Indigenous students on various issues.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Question Period

A member asked about centralized garbage collection and if this was a good use of resources and faculty time. Wade Epp, Associate Vice-President Campus Operations responded that the change was made to be more environmentally sustainable and cost effective. This was trialed previously, and if additional collection points or changes are required, the specifics can be adjusted. The member reiterated that the question was more directly about if this was a good use of faculty time.

A member indicated that this was in conflict with the Accessibility Plan and was contrary to the idea of universal design. Dr. McDougall responded that this was an issue of balancing different priorities, but that it was not in complete contravention of the Accessibility Plan as alternatives exist.

A member spoke about how faculty members are not able to assess if something is or is not a financial imperative. The Chair asked if there was a question, and the member indicated that it was just a comment.

10. Adjournment

(Deters): That the meeting be adjourned at 4:00 pm.