

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL REPORT

JUNE 2026



Room 110, 1 Campus Drive
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7N 5A3



Telephone: (306) 966-6960
Fax: (306) 966-6978
E-mail: contactus@ussu.ca
Website: www.ussu.ca

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Over the past month, the USSU Executive, President Abtin Safaeian, Vice-President Operations and Finance Elmer Vincent, Vice-President Academic Affairs Ashley Mendez Rosales, and Vice-President Student Affairs Azul Gonzalez Avila have been focused on student advocacy, engagement, and collaboration. Through meetings with students, university leaders, and community partners, we continue to prioritize initiatives that support student success, accessibility, affordability and belonging.

Our team is working closely with USSU staff and senior management to review governance documents, strengthen student engagement opportunities, and plan initiatives for the year ahead, including preparations for Welcome Week and other student-focused programming.

On behalf of the 2026–27 USSU Executive Team, thank you for the opportunity to share updates on our work. We remain committed to advocating for students and working in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan to enhance the student experience.

Reflections from VP Gonzalez Avila (she/her)



“As the USSU concludes its first official month of the term, I have been focused on building relationships across campus, supporting student-centred initiatives, and developing long-term programming plans for the upcoming academic year. This month has been a valuable opportunity to better understand students' needs and to begin laying the foundation for initiatives that promote inclusion, community engagement, and student well-being.

Throughout May, I participated in several initiatives connected to awareness, advocacy, and community support. In recognition of Sexual Violence Awareness Month, our team worked on outreach and educational efforts, including the creation of social media video content aimed at encouraging conversation and awareness surrounding sexual violence and consent. I also attended the Pride Flag Raising ceremony on campus in support of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and participated in conversations surrounding Jewish Heritage Month and the importance of recognizing and celebrating diverse student communities on campus.

In addition to ongoing programming efforts, I have begun developing a broader year-long events and engagement plan focused on creating accessible, creative, and community-oriented experiences for students throughout the academic year. Planning has also begun for Welcome Week, where I have been collaborating with fellow executives and campus partners to explore ways to create an engaging and welcoming environment for both new and returning students.

This month, I also had the opportunity to meet with several campus support centres and committees, including the Women's Centre, Pride Centre, and Help Centre, to better understand the services and advocacy work being done across campus and identify opportunities for collaboration moving forward. Additionally, I attended meetings with the USSU Childcare Centre Committee, and Parking Committee, which provided valuable insight into ongoing student concerns and university operations that impact student life.

Part of my role this month has also involved responding to and supporting students with concerns related to residence experiences and campus life. While I continue learning the responsibilities of the Vice-President Student Affairs position, these experiences have helped me better understand the importance of advocacy, communication, and student support within this role. I look forward to continuing to strengthen relationships with students and campus partners while developing programming and initiatives that foster a stronger sense of belonging and community throughout the year.”

Reflections from VP Mendez Rosales (she/her)



“The month of May has been a very insightful and eye-opening time as the new VP of Academic Affairs. On the very first day, I had to jump in to help students with their grievances, academic and non-academic. I knew this would be the case, so I made it my goal to understand the student grievance processes before my first official day of work.

I understand the crucial role I play in a student's academic career, I plan on respecting that role and the relationship I carry with students. I can't interact with every undergraduate that studies here at USASK, but for those that I do, I try to do everything in my power to help them understand and navigate the world of appeals and hearings. Directly or indirectly, the work I do as the VP of Academic Affairs affects students.

Once I was able to sort and help students I was able to focus on the long term projects that come with the job such as planning for Academic Awareness Week, fleshing out how I'll execute what I campaigned on, understanding the different Committees I sit in, and being part of the Provost and Vice-President Academic Search Committee, this list goes on as the days pass but these are one of the things I worked the most on in May.

As part of my campaign, I plan to contact Colleges and Departments throughout my term to discuss the course weight of a final exam and how it affects students' academic and personal well-being. Students deserve various ways of showing their understanding. I believe that with a combination of assignments, exams, quizzes and hands-on work, students will have a rich and diverse learning environment. I will be in contact with the Gwenna Moss Center for Teaching and Learning to figure out a way to best approach and deliver my plan.”

Reflections from VP Vincent (he/him)



“My first month as VP Operations and Finance has been a significant learning experience, and I am excited to continue fulfilling the expectations of this role throughout the year. Following my predecessor’s term, I worked to resolve the remaining disbursement requests from April. Six requests were processed, allowing us to wrap up the 2025–2026 academic year and ensure that outstanding financial matters were addressed.

At the time of writing, six campus groups have completed their ratification, with two additional groups ratified provisionally. Many of these groups are already planning events for the summer months, which is encouraging to see, as these initiatives will help build community and student engagement ahead of the fall semester. As part of my work with campus groups, I have also updated the campus group policy. These updates are intended to make the ratification process more accessible, including significantly lowering ratification rates to better support clubs and keep the process affordable for student leaders.

As for Transit, I have continued to monitor the updates being provided by the City, especially as temporary service adjustments are now affecting student routes. The City has announced ongoing Link rapid transit infrastructure work, which has led to temporary changes on routes including 16, 17, 4/40s, and 517. Route 16 is temporarily ending at the University, while Route 517 is operating as a temporary shuttle between Clarence Avenue and Place Riel.

Additionally, I am monitoring updates to the Link system as construction continues. While progress in transit advocacy was limited this month, the changes underway will directly impact how students move to and from campus. As these projects continue, I hope to keep students informed and continue advocating for a transit system that is reliable, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the university community.”

Reflections from President Safaeian (he/him)



“Over the past month, my work has centred on completing my onboarding as President, advancing student affordability, strengthening relationships across the University of Saskatchewan, and supporting student advocacy and campus engagement.

As an incoming President, I undertook a comprehensive onboarding with senior management and staff to develop a thorough understanding of the organization. This included sessions on governance and procedures, the responsibilities of the President's role, accounting, facilities, operations and student services, communications, and events and campaigns, as well as a detailed review of USSU bylaws and policies across the executive, operations and finance, human resources, and University Students' Council portfolios. I also completed a Centre's orientation, reviewed directors' liability, and received an introduction to the Board of Governors from Keith Martell.

I continued to advance several key affordability initiatives, including a prospective USSU discount partnership program to reduce everyday student costs and preliminary planning for a potential textbook exchange. Student affordability is the main focus for us this year. I was recently interviewed by Global News about students' cost-of-living concerns, and these projects reflect my ongoing commitment to easing the financial pressures students face.

I represented USSU at the University Council in Convocation Hall, where I delivered remarks on behalf of students. Serving on the Financial Appeal Review Committee and the Governance Committee, I participated in the bi-weekly *mistatimôk* committee, contributed to Board preparation, and consulted with the administration on Academic Misconduct Regulations, including meeting with Susan Bens. I have also begun planning for the University Students' Council fall term.

We were fortunate to attend a number of community-building events, including the President's Welcome, the USSU retreat, the Pride Flag Raising with the executive team and the Centres, and the Prince Albert Pride Walk. I was fortunate to attend Spring Convocation 2026 and the Gairdner Connects Lecture featuring Dr. Kang, and we began planning for Welcome Week. In collaboration with Azul and the USSU executive team, we supported the development of social media content, including a video promoting Sexual Violence Awareness.

One of my main goals coming into this role was to connect with former USSU presidents and initiate outreach to other student union presidents across Canada to exchange ideas and best practices. I also introduced the executive team to university leaders, including Scott Banda, Jay Wilson, Dr. Sarah Forgie, and Keith Martell, and strengthened relationships with deans and senior leaders across campus. We also began training in anti-racism, Indigenous history, and Robert's Rules of Order, and started working on a platform to promote Indigenous history learning.

I look forward to continuing this work and to building further initiatives that support students at USask throughout the year.”

Respectfully submitted,



Abtin Safaeian
President, USSU



Elmer Vincent
VP Operations and Finance, USSU



Ashley Mendez Rozalez
VP Academic, USSU



Azul González Avila
VP Student Affairs, USSU



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