MINUTES

University Council
Date: October 22, 2026
Time: 2:30–4:30 pm
Location: Convocation Hall (PMB 120) and Zoom
Presiding Officer: Chair Ralph Deters
Recording: Danielle Rudulier

The meeting was called to order at 2:35 pm.

The Chair 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 made to Dr. John W. B. Stewart, Professor Emeritus, College of Agriculture and Bioresources by Angela Bedard-Haughn, Dean, College of Agriculture and Bioresources.

2. Chairs Opening Remarks

Chair Deters mentioned that the Council Executive met with the President's Executive Committee to discuss creating opportunities for campus-wide dialogue on artificial intelligence and the responsible use of technology. It was noted that the next steps will be to establish a series of campus conversations at multiple levels, with the Provost, the President's Executive Committee, and Council Chairs all playing a role in advancing these discussions.

3. Agenda

Motion: (Jones/Shin): That the agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

4. Minutes

Motion: (Singh/Jones): That the minutes of September 24, 2026 be approved as amended.

CARRIED

5. Governance Committee

5.1 Notice of Motion: Roster of Faculty and Students for Appeal Panels

Paul Jones, Chair of the Governance Committee provided notice of a motion recommending the creation of a roster of faculty members and students to serve on university-level appeal boards. If approved, the proposal would require amendments to Council bylaws and regulations, including those related to student academic misconduct and academic appeals. The proposal is intended to establish a pool of trained faculty and student members to ensure appeal board participants are adequately prepared to adjudicate complex and often contentious matters.

During discussion, members raised questions regarding the terms of members, ensuring all in-scope faculty be included and emphasized the importance of comprehensive training, particularly on the balance of probability

and beyond reasonable doubt. The committee welcomed suggestions to inform the development of the training program and indicated that the motion will come forward for a vote at the next meeting.

5.2 Item for Information: Standing Committee Update

Chair Jones reported that the committee is reviewing and proposing targeted amendments to the procedures for student appeals and academic matters to improve clarity and transparency and better align them with current university policies and practices. The committee emphasized that the project is not intended to be a comprehensive rewrite and indicated that a full proposal will be brought forward to a future Council meeting.

The committee also discussed protocols for online attendance for and participation for Council meetings, particularly in relation to contentious votes, with further consideration being given to processes that would ensure such matters can be appropriately managed through offline measures when necessary. Further review of best practices will be undertaken, with a proposal expected to be brought forward at a future Council meeting.

6. Nominations Committee

Carolyn Augusta, Chair of the Nominations committee, presented the committee's items as outlined in the agenda package.

6.1. Request for Decision: Omnibus Council Committee Vacancies

The full report is in the agenda package.

There were no questions.

There were no nominations from the floor.

Motion: (Augusta/Dobson): It is recommended by the Nominations Committee that Council approve the nominations described in the attached report, effective October 22, 2026.

CARRIED

7. Planning and Priorities Committee

PPC Vice-Chair Christian Willenborg provided a committee update to council members. Dr. Willenborg described that the committee received an overview from the Vice-President Research portfolio highlighting continued growth in research activity, funding, partnerships, publications, graduate student participation, and international engagement. Committee discussion focused on improving public trust in science, increasing undergraduate involvement in research and innovation, and addressing the growing demands on research administration and support services as research activity expands.

The committee also reviewed proposed updates to a number of administrative policies. The revisions are intended to modernize existing policies, align them with current governance structures, legal requirements, and organizational responsibilities, and improve clarity and consistency. Members were provided side-by-side comparisons of the current and proposed policies to offer feedback prior to consideration by senior leadership and the Board of Governors.

In addition, the committee received a confidential update regarding USask's benchmarking information program and its use to help inform improvement initiative planning and decision-making. It was noted that UniForum is one of several evidence-based inputs used to inform planning and resource allocation.

8. Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee

Chair Lisa Birke reported that the RSAW Committee held its first meeting of the year, which focused primarily on orienting members to the committee's mandate and activities. The committee received an overview from the Vice-President Research portfolio on its strategic priorities and planned initiatives for the coming year.

As part of its responsibility to advise Council on matters related to research integrity and ethics, the committee discussed its work plan for the year. Building on its engagement with animal ethics issues in the previous year, the committee agreed to begin a focused dialogue with the Human Research Ethics Board (REB). Members spent time identifying key questions and areas of interest to guide future discussions with the REB where a further update is expected at a future Council meeting.

9. Scholarships and Awards Committee

Chair Veronika Makarova provided a committee update noting that the Scholarships and Awards first meeting of the year focused on routine business and consideration of recommendations from the Special Terms Subcommittee. The subcommittee recommended awarding five special-term scholarships to nine recipients, with individual awards ranging from $1,500 to $4,000 and a total value of $17,500. Committee members reviewed more than 145 shortlisted applications as part of the selection process. The committee expressed its appreciation to the donors whose contributions supported these awards, including Peter Millard, Marion Evans Younger, John Lambert, Kathy Watts, and Hub City Curling. These awards represent a small portion of the scholarship funding administered by the committee, with additional scholarship recommendations expected later in the academic year.

10. Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources Committee

Chair Marguerite Koole provided a committee update noting that TLARC has established three working groups focused on student engagement, wellness and connection; accessibility and inclusive learning design; and artificial intelligence and assessment practices. Chair Koole noted that the working groups will be largely self-organizing and may seek input from individuals outside the committee as their work progresses. Members also discussed opportunities to contribute to broader institutional conversations on the responsible use of artificial intelligence, including potential collaboration with the Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee and the Provost's Office. TLARC's work will focus on teaching, learning, and assessment-related implications of AI, while broader issues related to ethics and research will be addressed through other university-level discussions.

11. Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships

11.1. Item for information: Joint Committee on Chairs and Professorships (JCCP) Annual Report 2025-2026

Chair Scott Walsworth presented the annual report, noting a productive year where they approved and advanced four new chair proposals.

The committee reviewed and improved its process for approving new chairs in response to concerns raised by Council, with the goal of better aligning approval timelines with fundraising activities, council processes, and Board of Governors schedules. Chair Walsworth highlighted the committees important coordinating role between University Council, the Board of Governors, University Relations, and several vice-presidential portfolios, while emphasizing that Council continues to provide the essential academic perspective in the review and approval of chair proposals.

12. Reports

12.1. President

President Bruni-Bossio began by welcoming Patti McDougall as the incoming Provost.

The President provided members with the draft UPlan 2035, describing it as focused and measurable intended to guide the university through a rapidly changing environment while strengthening its connection to Saskatchewan and enhancing its global impact.

The plan was informed by extensive consultation involving more than 3,600 participants and emphasizes key themes including service, community engagement, Indigenous priorities, belonging, wellbeing, and a "local-to-global" approach.

The proposed vision focuses on advancing healthy people, animals and ecosystems; responsible technological transformation; sustainable energy and resource futures; global food and water security; and thriving communities. The mission emphasizes collaboration, teaching and learning, research excellence, community engagement, and support for Indigenous priorities.

Seven strategic priorities were identified: learning and academic excellence, student experience, research and creative activity, Indigenous achievement, infrastructure and operations, safety and wellbeing, and financial stewardship.

Members were advised that additional consultation will occur through Council committees and a feedback survey before the plan returns to Council for further consideration in November.

12.2. Interim Provost and Vice President Academic

Interim Provost Patti McDougall began by mentioning that USask placed sixth among 19 mid-sized institutions in the newly revised 2027 *Maclean's* university rankings. USask ranked among the top five institutions in areas such as research volume, library acquisitions, and reputation, reinforcing its standing as a leading research-intensive university. It was noted that significant changes to the ranking methodology and institutional categories make year-over-year comparisons difficult and establish a new baseline for future analysis.

Dr. McDougall announced an upcoming discussion on the closure of the Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research (CHASR), inviting interested community members to participate in a meeting on November 13. In addition, members were informed about plans to organize a series of campus dialogues on the responsible use of artificial intelligence, focusing on both its opportunities and challenges in teaching, learning, and research, and highlighting expertise and initiatives already underway across the university.

12.3. Graduate Students Association (GSA)

Vice-President External Affairs Rozars Faisal reported progress on several initiatives, including advancement of its childcare project, with the College Quarter being considered as a potential location and discussions underway regarding additional opportunities in the Education Building.

In addition, there are ongoing governance improvements, including electoral reform, updates to governing documents, and the development of new election policies. Advocacy efforts continue related to graduate student research funding, student wellness, and mental health services, including outreach to provincial and federal elected officials.

Mr. Faisal expressed the important role that the GSA can play in advocating for other university communities and units.

12.4. University of Saskatchewan Students Union (USSU

USSU President Abtin Safaeian noted a successful start to the academic year, including Fall Welcome Week, New Indigenous Student Welcome, Residence Welcome, and Prince Albert Campus Welcome activities. The USSU identified student affordability and reconciliation as key priorities, highlighting ongoing advocacy for tuition payment plans, expanded scholarship and bursary funding, increased awareness of financial assistance programs, and collaboration with student organizations across Saskatchewan to support open educational resources.

Mr. Safaeian reported progress on several student initiatives, including the relaunch of the College of Law's Pro Bono Clinic, efforts to improve communication regarding the Bowl closure, support for student groups, advocacy services, and funding for student-led projects. He further noted plans to strengthen collaboration among student leaders nationally through a new virtual network of student union presidents.

13. Other Business

There was no other business.

14. Question Period

A member inquired about the status of the strategic enrolment management and faculty complement planning initiatives. Interim Provost Patti McDougall explained that these initiatives are expected to advance as part of the development of the forthcoming academic plan, which will align with and support UPlan 2035.

Furthermore, Dr. McDougall reported that strategic enrolment management work is continuing through several active initiatives, including recruitment planning, cross-college teaching discussions, and international enrolment planning. While faculty complement planning remains primarily the responsibility of colleges through the university's resource allocation model, it will continue to be supported through institutional planning and strategic hiring initiatives. Members were advised that further discussion and consultation on these priorities will occur as the academic plan is developed.

10. Adjournment

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