



## Report of the Senate Engagement Committee

### FOR INFORMATION

**Presented by:** Tamara Buckwold, Chair, Engagement Committee

**Date of Meeting:** October 17, 2026

**Subject:** Engagement Committee – Report on Activities

**Senate action:** For information only.

#### Background and Summary:

Members of the Senate Engagement Committee are Tamara Buckwold (chair), Shankar Das, Roberta Gallagher, Janice Paslawski, Chancellor Scott Banda, and Nandish Jha (student member), with Julian Demkiw, University Secretary and Chief Governance Officer, and Kris Brown, University Relations. Since the date of the last Senate meeting, the committee met on June 8 and September 1, 2026. The following provides an overview of the committee's work.

#### Senate Handbook

At the June 8 meeting, the chair introduced the final version of the Senate Handbook and confirmed it was ready for distribution. By the September 1 meeting, the handbook had been posted on the Senate website and circulated by email, including directly to new Senate members, though no feedback had been received. The chair will highlight the handbook at the October Senate meeting and invite feedback; members suggested making printed copies available at the meeting, at the registration desk or round tables, and providing a way for members to request a printed copy.

#### Review of the April 2026 Senate Meeting

The committee reviewed the April 2026 Senate meeting and noted that it was well organized and highly engaging, with participants remaining actively involved throughout the day. Members highlighted the VIDO tour as a particular strength and appreciated the comprehensive agenda, the excellent minutes of the October 2025 meeting provided by the Governance Office, the use of a single document to communicate key information, and the welcoming atmosphere created by university leaders and facilitators. The committee's primary concern was insufficient time to fully explore all agenda items and discussion topics. Additional suggestions included creating more opportunities for informal social connections among Senate members.

### **Summary of Plenary Senate Meetings**

At the September 1 meeting, the committee discussed a proposal for concise summaries of the content of plenary Senate meetings to assist Senate members in reporting to their constituencies. Committee members supported testing a separate, brief “Summary of Discussion” organized by agenda item and key themes that would not require formal approval and would generally not attribute comments to individual Senate members. The committee acknowledged the constraints of available administrative staff support in advancing this initiative.

### **October Senate Meeting and Engagement Session**

At the September 1 meeting, the committee reviewed the tentative agenda for the October Senate meeting. Regarding agenda sequencing, the committee supported exploring a mixed format with the President’s report early in the day, Senate committee reports in the morning, the engagement session after lunch, and governance and administrative reports later in the day.

### **Senate Survey**

At the June 8 meeting, the committee agreed to develop a Senate survey, beginning with Senate members and potentially followed by a survey of university leaders. At the September 1 meeting, the committee reviewed the draft survey by section, supporting questions on member location, sharing of contact information, and standardized member profiles, and reviewed content covering the general Senate experience, committee participation, district representatives, organizational delegates, student members, ex officio members, community outreach, and the Senate Handbook.

### **University Relations and Alumni Engagement**

At the September 1 meeting, University Relations representative Kris Brown presented the draft Alumni Engagement Strategy. The data-informed strategy is intended to bridge the gap between alumni pride and active participation by providing relevant, accessible programming and strengthening relationship management, with program development, communications, relationship management, measurement, and resourcing identified as key elements of implementation. The committee discussed opportunities for collaboration between Senate and Alumni Engagement, including regional events, advocacy and ambassador roles, mentorship, and community outreach; the strategy is expected to be presented to Senate in the spring.

### **USask 125**

At the June 8 meeting, committee member Shankar Das reported that conversations with University Relations leadership signalled that USask 125 would be well timed for the institution and preliminary steps towards planning have begun. The committee agreed that a structured process for Senate involvement in the initiative through a potential working group or by other means is desirable.

### **New Member Orientation and Buddy System**

At the September 1 meeting, the committee discussed support for new Senate members. The governance officer invited committee members to assist with virtual orientation sessions for new Senate members, and members expressed willingness to participate subject to scheduling. Further discussion of potential mentoring or pairing to support new members was deferred to a future meeting.

**Next Steps and Timeline:**

The committee will meet in November and will work on finalizing the survey. They will also look at a potential summary of discussion from the October meeting of Senate. The committee will continue to liaise with University Relations in development of the alumni engagement strategy.