

Senate report on Academic Council, April 2025

Submitted by Dr. Zsuzsa Papp and Rory Picklyk, non-voting representatives on the University Council

As Senate representatives to the University Academic Council, we are pleased to submit the following as an overview of the activities of the council for the academic year 2024/25.

As a reminder, the University Council oversees and directs the university's academic affairs including:

- grants academic degrees, diplomas and certificates;
- grants scholarships, prizes, fellowships, bursaries and exhibitions;
- approves all academic programs, new programs and program deletions;
- authorizes the board to establish new colleges, schools, departments, endowed chairs and institutes;
- prescribes methods and rules for evaluating student performance;
- disciplines students for academic misconduct and hears student appeals;
- prescribes qualifications for admission;
- sets the academic schedule;
- reviews library policies;
- makes recommendations on physical and budgetary plans for the university;
- and makes recommendations on any other matters it considers to be in the interest of the university

Not surprisingly, most of the work of Council is completed at the committee level. The following Committees of Council bring their reports to Council for discussion and often a decision:

- Academic Programs
- Governance
- Executive
- Nominations
- Planning and Priorities
- Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work
- Scholarships and Awards
- Teaching, Learning and Academic Resources

The University administration is consistent in utilizing the committee structures to examine items raised at council meetings and to inform discussion and manage information flow to aid in decision making at Council meetings.

Discussion items of note at meetings over the past months would include:

1. The changing political climate municipally, provincially, nationally in Canada and indeed internationally and the potential impacts on Universities across North America.
2. The impacts of Federal immigration policy on international student enrollment at the Graduate and undergraduate level and related impacts on:
 - Domestic student recruitment
 - Academic Research
 - Campus Culture
 - Tuition Revenues
3. Continued program development in response to academic excellence, research, industry, social and environmental influences and commitment to be what the world needs.
4. The importance of a campus wide commitment to sustainability on campus with specific questions related to the development of a comprehensive composting program.
5. Safety for the campus community has been raised with detailed questions recently focused on pedestrian safety as relates to the development of the City of Saskatoon Rapid Bus transit system with stations anticipated on Collage Drive, and the concerns of resulting increased pedestrian traffic at the intersection of College and Wiggins.

Of particular note is the commitment demonstrated by the leadership of the Graduate Students Association (GSA) and the University of Saskatchewan Students Union (USSU) and their collective work in supporting the student experience across the campus community and combatting concerns of student food and housing security.