

Report of the Senate Education Committee

FOR INFORMATION

Presented by: Robert Henderson, Chair, Education Committee

Date of Meeting: April 25, 2026

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

Summary of Activities:

The members of the Education Committee are Robert Henderson (chair), Bev Balaski, Jane MacLeod, Audrey Hestand, Julia Paulson, Michael Bradley, and Sharon Jacob. Since the date of the last Senate meeting, the committee met on three occasions.

Topics of discussion have included Flexible Learning Initiatives, CV Admission Requirements, Strategic Enrolment Management Strategy and several admission qualification confirmations.

Flexible Learning Initiative

Members were joined by Dr. Wendy James, Director of the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning for a presentation on USask's Flexible Learning initiative, which aims to support enrolment growth, increase access across Saskatchewan, and respond to changing social and economic needs.

Members engaged in discussions to better understand the initiative, learning that participation in flexible learning varies by college. Graduate programs tend to be more adaptable than undergraduate programs, though some programs continue to face challenges where in-person instruction is essential or where faculty have limited experience with online delivery.

Industry perspectives emphasize the value of micro-credentials and competency-based learning to support workforce upskilling, with less emphasis placed on the mode of delivery.

The discussion highlighted several ongoing challenges, including safeguarding academic integrity in lab-based courses, maintaining student engagement in online settings, and addressing faculty workload and technology needs. Members also acknowledged that, despite strong industry demand for work-integrated learning, funding constraints remain a significant barrier to expanding experiential learning and co-op opportunities.

CV Admission Requirements

Many graduate programs require applicants to submit a CV as part of the admission process, where this practice is becoming increasingly common with new programs. Over the past year, the Senate Education Committee discussed the implications of adding a CV to admission requirements. Members

raised concerns about ensuring consistency in CV formatting and minimizing potential bias, as CVs can introduce subjectivity into the process.

Marc Usunier, Senior Director of Graduate Student Services, joined the committee to address the practise and explained how CVs are a standard component of admissions for research-based graduate programs, where they help contextualize transcripts and are often supplemented by personal or research statements.

Dr. Usunier addressed concerns about equity and potential bias, particularly for applicants with limited access to extracurricular or volunteer opportunities noting that CGPS is implementing mitigation strategies, including best-practice guidance, increased use of interviews, and multi-member admissions committees.

The discussion emphasized the need to interpret work experience and personal responsibilities fairly and highlighted interviews as a key tool for holistic assessment. Evidence from pilot cohorts showed that non-traditional applicants often perform as well as or better than traditional candidates.

Regarding AI, USask does not use it in admissions decisions, though applicants must disclose any AI assistance. CV requirements remain program-specific, and the committee noted the importance of ongoing efforts to improve fairness, transparency, and consistency in admissions practices, especially with emerging AI trends.

Strategic Enrolment Management

Loleen Berdahl, Acting Deputy Provost, Marjorie Delbaere, Interim Vice Provost, Students and Learning and Troy Harkot, Chief Analytics Officer provided members with an update on the Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) work and its alignment with institutional planning.

It was emphasized that SEM follows a holistic, student-lifecycle and lifelong-learning approach and must align with the forthcoming University Plan, Academic Strategy and provincial accountability requirements. While enrollment numbers and mix remain important, equal focus is placed on student success, experience, and graduate outcomes.

Senate feedback gathered in October continues to inform SEM priorities, particularly in the areas of workforce development, accessibility and community-based education, Saskatchewan-specific expertise, emerging impacts of artificial intelligence, stronger industry and community partnerships, and growing demand for flexible learning options. The university continues to use a five-year rolling enrollment projection model, with current projections to 2025 remaining in effect. New long-term projections will be developed once the University Plan and Academic Strategy are finalized, with an update anticipated in 2027. Emphasis was placed on maintaining two-way communication with Senate as this work progresses.

Academic Programs Committee of Council Connectivity

In an ongoing effort to integrate the work of the Academic Programs Committee (APC) of Council and the Senate Education Committee, Chair Henderson attended two Academic Programs Committee (APC) meetings to learn about the Academic Program Review process at USask as well as ongoing discussions

of Casper Situational Judgement testing which was flagged by the committee as an area of concern last year.

The program review process at USask is an internal, informational exercise rather than an accreditation requirement. The process does not include scoring, prioritizing recommendations, or requiring their implementation. While some committee members suggested that certain programs might benefit from more frequent reviews, there are currently no plans to change the process. Chair Henderson provided this briefing to the Senate Education Committee as a way to inform the committee about these campus practices related to the academic mission.

Last academic cycle, a working group was tasked by Council to review the use of situational judgement testing (Casper in particular) as part of admission processes. The working group completed its report to APC, which found that programs across campus use and analyze the test in different ways. Overall, there is limited evidence demonstrating that the test is beneficial, and several programs and colleges have identified concerns with its use. Notably, the College of Nursing brought forward an admission change to remove the test, and the College of Dentistry has also decided to discontinue it after a trial period. It was noted that while the test was previously widely adopted, there is now a trend toward programs eliminating it due to identified issues. The committee was appreciative of this development in light of similar questions previously raised by this committee.

Changes to Admission Qualifications

The *Senate Bylaws* delegate the Education Committee the authority to confirm changes to admissions qualifications (that have received approval from University Council) (part V, section 8, clause d).

Members engaged in meaningful discussion over two meetings with Academic Programs Committee Chair Paul Jones on several Admission Qualification Changes.

1. Indigenous Language Certificate
2. Doctor of Pharmacy
3. Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing
4. Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy
5. Bachelor of Science Dental Hygiene
6. Bachelor of Science Dental Therapy
7. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) and Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (PDBSN)

1. Indigenous Language Certificate

Background:

The College of Education proposed admission changes to the Indigenous Language Certificate to make the program more accessible to students as well as promote lifelong learning and enhance ally/partnership, communication, and reconciliation between communities. The changes included removing the requirement for a professional teaching certificate, eliminating special case admission review, allowing holders of any undergraduate degree or equivalent to apply, and included special consideration for applicants who did not meet criteria. Additionally, 20 seats were designated for Indigenous applicants.

Consultation:

The College of Education submitted a proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on November 19, 2025. The Academic Programs Committee reviewed the proposal and voted in favour of the changes. Furthermore, Council approved this change on December 18, 2025 and the Senate Education Committee confirmed this change on February 3, 2026 by electronic vote.

Motion: (Balaski/ MacLeod) *It is recommended that the Senate Education Committee confirm Council's approval of the admission qualification changes to the Indigenous Language Certificate, effective for the 2027-2028 admission cycle.*

2. Doctor of Pharmacy**Background:**

The College of Pharmacy and Nutrition proposed an admission change to the Doctor of Pharmacy program to add three credit units of university-level Indigenous learning to the prerequisite requirements. This change supports the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition's new Strategic Plan initiative of meaningful integration of Indigenous content throughout the curriculum, and also aligns with the Canadian Council for Accreditation of Pharmacy Programs accreditation standards that the PharmD required curriculum contains content in...Indigenous, history, values, and healthcare needs.

Consultation:

The College of Pharmacy and Nutrition submitted a proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on December 17, 2025. APC had the opportunity to review the proposal and voted in favour of the changes. Furthermore, Council approved this change on January 29, 2026 and the Senate Education Committee confirmed this change on February 3, 2026 by electronic vote.

Motion (Balaski/ MacLeod) *It is recommended that the Senate Education Committee confirm Council's approval of the Doctor of Pharmacy Admission Qualification change, effective for the 2027-2028 admission cycle*

3. Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing**Background:**

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies recommended an admission requirement change for the PhD in Nursing program. The change is to clarify two existing admission qualifications and provide transparency about admission processes:

- how the admission average is calculated;
- the credit unit and course level requirements for prerequisite courses.

Consultation:

The Graduate Programs Committee reviewed the proposal at their meeting on November 17, 2025, and approved the proposal. The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies submitted a proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on January 7, 2026. APC had the opportunity to review the

proposal discuss the proposal with the proponents and voted in favour of the changes. Furthermore, Council approved this change on January 29, 2026 and the Senate Education Committee confirmed this change on February 3, 2026 by electronic vote.

Motion: (MacLeod/Balaski) *It is recommended that the Senate Education Committee confirm Council's approval of the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Admission Qualification change, effective for the 2027-2028 admission cycle.*

4. Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy

Background:

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies recommended admission requirement changes for the PhD in Public Policy. The change involves removing a “personal statement addressing 4 specified areas” to simply a “personal statement” but indicating that the statement should follow guidelines provided on the recruitment website. The proposed changes aim to simplify the admission requirement by providing detailed guidelines on the program’s recruitment page on what the admissions committee expects.

The change is expected to improve the applicant experience, encourage more competitive and well-prepared submissions, and provide the committee with richer information for making informed admission decisions.

Consultation:

The Graduate Programs Committee reviewed the proposal at their meeting on November 17, 2025, and approved the proposal. The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies submitted its proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on January 7, 2026. The Committee reviewed the submission and voted in favor of the requested changes, subject to a few minor revisions to include a link to the guidelines page as well as wording around the use of AI, which were addressed on January 16, 2026. Furthermore, Council approved this change on January 29, 2026 and the Senate Education Committee confirmed this change on February 3, 2026 by electronic vote.

Motion: (Balaski/ MacLeod) *It is recommended that the Senate Education Committee confirm Council's approval of the Doctor of Philosophy in Public Policy Admission Qualification change, effective for the 2027-2028 admission cycle.*

5. Bachelor of Science Dental Hygiene

Background:

The College of Dentistry proposed an admission change to the Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene program where all post-secondary coursework from any recognized or accredited institution be included when calculating admission averages, provided applicants have completed at least 18 credit units. The current admission policy classifies applicants with 18 or more transferable credit units to the University of Saskatchewan as post-secondary students, but because the College of Dentistry does not accept

transfer credits, applicants with dental education have not had those courses recognized in the admission process.

Additional proposed updates include adjusting the English prerequisite to require only one 30 level course in response to upcoming provincial graduation changes, formally recognizing fine and performing arts subjects as acceptable elective options, and calculating admission averages using prerequisite subjects to align with other direct entry programs.

Consultation:

The College of Dentistry submitted a proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on February 4, 2026. APC had the opportunity to review the proposal and voted in favour of the changes. Furthermore, Council approved this change on March 19, 2026 and the Senate Education Committee confirmed this change on April 6, 2026 by electronic vote.

Motion: (Paulson/Balaski) That the Senate Education Committee confirm the admission qualification changes to the Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene, effective for the 2027-2028 application cycle.

6. Bachelor of Science Dental Therapy

Background:

The College of Dentistry proposed an admission change to the Bachelor of Science in Dental Therapy program to align the program's admission requirements with Saskatchewan's new high school graduation standards, under which only one 30 level English course is required as a prerequisite. As a result, several options are being removed, although English Language Arts will continue to be the preferred course.

Additionally, the personal statement requirement is being removed and replaced with an interview process, which is intended to provide a more accurate representation of applicants.

Consultation:

The College of Dentistry submitted a proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on February 4, 2026. APC had the opportunity to review the proposal and voted in favour of the changes. Furthermore, Council approved this change on March 19, 2026. The Senate Education Committee provided feedback on the proposal which resulted in a few modifications for clarity and confirmed this change on April 6, 2026 by electronic vote. The modifications to the proposal will be reported back to APC for information.

Motion: (Hestand/Macleod) That the Senate Education Committee confirm the admission qualification changes to the Bachelor of Science in Dental Therapy, effective for the 2027-2028 application cycle with the following changes:

- *Removing High School from the selection criteria bonus point system paragraph.*
- *Adjusting the language under the international-trained Dentist Applications: Completion of a degree in a dental program from an academic institution not recognized by the Commission on Dental Education of Canada (CDAC).*

7. Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) and Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (PDBSN)

Background:

The College of Nursing proposed an admission change to remove the situational judgement testing (Casper) from the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) and Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (PDBSN) Programs. After an extensive internal analysis of over 1200 students from 2021 to 2024, Casper scores showed only minimal predictive correlation within 5 key variables (admission GPA, graduation GPA, final course grades, NCLEX exam results, and number of exam attempts). Analysis showed that rankings of applicants also changed very little when Casper was removed from the admission formula.

The College feels that by eliminating Casper, it strengthens the fairness in their admissions process and aligns with their strategic mission to support accessible and inclusive nursing education.

Consultation:

The College of Nursing submitted a proposal to the Academic Programs Committee (APC) on March 4, 2026. APC had the opportunity to review the proposal and voted in favour of the changes. Furthermore, Council approved this change on March 19, 2026 and the Senate Education Committee confirmed this change on April 6, 2026 by electronic vote.

Motion: (Hestand/Paulson) That the Senate Education Committee confirm the admission qualification changes to remove situational judgement testing from the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) and Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (PDBSN) Programs, effective for the 2027-2028 application cycle.

Next Steps and Timeline:

The Education Committee is scheduled to meet next on May 22, 2026.