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It is an honour to continue representing Senate on University Council. As one of the three governing bodies of the University of Saskatchewan, Council is responsible for overseeing and directing the academic affairs of the university. Council meets regularly throughout the academic year, typically on a monthly basis from September through June. Meetings are chaired by the Council Chair, and materials, including agendas and minutes, are publicly available.

This report provides an overview of Council activities from October 2025 through March 2026, highlighting key decisions, information items, and emerging themes relevant to Senate. In addition, we highly recommend the USask Council Gazette [University Council - Governance Office | University of Saskatchewan](#) which summarizes council activities twice a years in an easy to read and fun way. The latest issue is expected as of April 2026.

Role and Function of University Council

University Council plays a central role in academic governance at USask. Its responsibilities include:

- Granting academic degrees, diplomas, and certificates
- Approving new academic programs and program changes or terminations
- Establishing policies governing academic matters, including student evaluation and admissions
- Awarding scholarships, bursaries, and prizes
- Recommending the establishment of academic units and institutes
- Addressing academic integrity and student appeals
- Providing advice on institutional priorities, including academic planning and resource allocation

Much of Council’s detailed work is conducted through its eight standing committees, including:

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

These committees play a critical role in reviewing proposals, shaping policy, and bringing forward recommendations for Council's consideration and approval.

Key Decisions and Approvals

Across the reporting period, Council considered and approved a wide range of academic and governance matters. Selected examples:

Academic Program Approvals and Changes

- Approval of new academic programs, certificates and program modifications across multiple colleges, such as Forest Resources Certificate, Graduate Certificate in Improvement Science, Large Animal Veterinary Specialty Internship.
- Changes to admission requirements and program structures in professional and graduate programs such as MSc in Periodontology, BSc Dental Hygiene, BSc Dental Therapy, Doctor of Pharmacy, BSc and PhD in Nursing, PhD in Public Policy and Diploma in Educational Studies.

These changes provide ongoing refinement of program offerings to align with student demand, labour market needs, and institutional priorities.

Program Terminations

- Approval of select program closures where enrolment, relevance, or strategic alignment no longer justified continuation

Governance and Policy Changes

- Revisions of Faculty bylaws in College of Nursing, ESB, College of Agriculture and bioresources, School of Rehabilitation Science
- Revisions to Council bylaws and committee terms of reference to improve clarity, efficiency, and alignment with changing governance practices
- Two new policies related to curriculum, assessment, and program oversight: course-based assessment and course delivery

Noteworthy is the upcoming change on how meetings are conducted: Adoption of the American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

Observations

In addition to formal decisions, Council receives regular updates and reports that inform discussion and strategic awareness. Notable items during this period included:

- Updates on institutional planning and priorities, including financial context and resource considerations
- Reports from standing committees outlining ongoing work and emerging issues
- Updates on research activity and academic initiatives across the university
- Continued recognition of faculty achievements and contributions to scholarship and research

Several recurring themes emerged across Council meetings during this period:

Academic Program Renewal and Responsiveness: There is a clear emphasis on ensuring that academic programs remain high-quality and aligned with both student needs and labour market demands.

Governance Effectiveness: Council continues to refine its governance structures, including committee mandates and processes. These efforts aim to improve clarity, and the effectiveness of academic decision-making.

Financial and Strategic Context: Discussions frequently acknowledged the broader financial environment facing the university sector. Council's work, particularly through Planning and Priorities, reflects an awareness of the need to balance academic excellence with financial sustainability.

Student Experience and Support: While not always the primary focus of decision items, student experience remains an underlying consideration in many discussions, including program design, awards, and academic policy.

Research and Institutional Reputation: Updates and discussions highlighted the continued importance of research excellence and its contribution to the university's national and international standing.

Council also continues the important tradition of recognizing members of the university community who have passed, acknowledging their contributions through formal tributes.

Conclusion

The October 2025 to March 2026 period reflects a steady pace of activity within University Council, with a strong focus on academic program development and refining governance, staying responsive to a changing post-secondary landscape.