

Submitted by Zsuzsa Papp and Rory Picklyk

It has been an honour to represent Senate on University Council. As one of three governing bodies of the University of Saskatchewan, Council is responsible for overseeing and directing the university's academic affairs. They meet on the third Thursday of every month between September and June. Dr. Vicki Squires is the chair of Council. Virtual attendance is accommodated. Agenda and minutes of the meetings are public and are posted on the USask website. 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 April, May, June and September 2025.

In general, the University Council:

- 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

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 utilizes the committee structure to examine items raised at council meetings and to inform discussion and manage information flow to aid in decision making at Council meetings.

Council also holds tributes to academic members of the University who have passed in recent months. Tributes are usually attended by family members and friends.

Examples of decisions of Council:

Changes to:

- Council bylaws (related to terms of reference for the Centres Subcommittee and Council Chair Election)
- Academic Courses Policy (related to student assessment and the role of the educator)
- Nominations Committee Terms of Reference

Centre approvals:

- Establishment of Business Research Integration and Development Group (BRIDGE) Knowledge Centre (housed in the ESB)

Program approvals:

- Master of Speech-Language Pathology
- Master of Occupational Therapy

Program Termination:

- Project Based Master of Mathematics

Change to Admission Requirements or Categories for the

- Master of Physician Assistant
- Masters degree admission category for the D.M.D program

Examples of Information provided to Council:

- Disestablishment of the Confucius Institute. It is noteworthy that the establishment of an institute is subject to a Council vote while disestablishment of an institute is not.

Discussion and report item highlights at meetings in April, May, June and September 2025 include:

- Discussions around Eligibility to Apply for, Hold, and Administer Research Funding Policy (board level policy). This proposed change in policy affects sessional lecturers and instructors, e.g., who normally are not allowed to hold tri-agency funding. The revision of the policy would make it possible to grant them this right by exception (individual case assessment).
- CASPer test scores used for admissions decisions in some colleges: need for evaluation of predictability of student success
- Importance of a campus wide commitment to sustainability with specific questions related to the development of a comprehensive composting program.
- Traffic safety on campus, pedestrian safety at the intersection and nearby of College and Wiggins.
- The changing political climate municipally, provincially, nationally in Canada and indeed internationally and the potential impacts on Universities across North America.
- A 'Think Tank' project aimed at generating creative ideas to improve USask's financial situation.
- Four University of Saskatchewan researchers have been recognized with one of Canada's highest academic honours for invaluable contributions in their fields. The Royal Society of Canada (RSC) is considered the most prestigious collection of Canadian scholars, artists and researchers across a vast interdisciplinary field. The RSC fosters intellectual leadership for Canada and for the world. Dr. Dwight Newman (DPhil) and Dr. Leon Kochian (PhD) have been named RSC Fellows, and Dr. Steven Rayan (PhD) and Dr. Allyson Stevenson (PhD) have both been named College Members of the RSC
- The USask and Muskeg Lake Cree Nation signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU)

Noteworthy is President Stoicheff's engaging, thoughtful and thought-provoking reports throughout the year.

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 combating concerns about student food and housing security.