

Senate Minutes (Non-Confidential)
October 25, 2025, 9 am – 4 pm
Exeter Room, Marquis Hall

1. Welcome

1.1. Meeting Opening and Greetings

Chancellor Banda called the meeting to Order. He thanked Dr. Keith Willoughby for hosting the reception the previous night. He provided a land acknowledgment recognizing Treaty 6 Territory and the Métis homeland.

Chancellor Banda, chairing his first Senate meeting, welcomed members and emphasized the university's role as a leader in education, research, and societal change. He expressed gratitude to outgoing President Peter Stoicheff, marking his final Senate meeting and his decade of leadership.

Chancellor Banda introduced new members, representing elected districts, appointed organizations, and ex officio roles.

Elected:

- Cheryl Lee Vertefeuille, District 4.
- Scott Burant, District 7.
- Mark Guidinger, District 11.
- Paula Marie Marsh, District 12.
- Eryn Siba, District 14.
- Janice Paslawski, Member-at-Large
- Monica Iron, Member-at-Large

Appointed:

- Daniel Burke, Institute of Chartered Professional Accountants of Saskatchewan
- Kendra Townsend, Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals
- Brett Kitchen, Saskatchewan Professional Planners Institutes
- Gerald Aalbers, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association
- James Rugg, University of Regina Alumni Association

Ex Officio:

- Lori Birrel, Dean, University Library
- Marjorie Delbaere, Interim Vice-Provost, Students and Learning
- Loleen Berdahl, Acting Deputy Provost
- Bernon Lee, Principal, St. Andrew's College
- Brett Vandale, Executive Director, Gabriel Dumont College

Student Members:

- Brock Neufeldt
- Jasmin Luu
- Palash Roy
- Ritu Patel
- Sharon Jacob

- Chang Ge
- Spencer Possberg

2. Agenda and Minutes

2.1. Adoption of the Agenda

MOTION – (Buckwold/Genest) - That the agenda be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

2.2. Conflict of Interest

Members were invited to declare any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest related to the agenda. **No conflicts of interest were declared.**

2.3. Approval of the Minutes from April 2025

MOTION – (Mosier/ Picklick) - That the minutes be approved as circulated.

CARRIED.

3. President's Address

3.1. President's Report to Senate

President Peter Stoicheff delivered his final report to Senate, reflecting on his decade of leadership and outlining four strategic priorities shaping the University of Saskatchewan's future: adapting to political and social realities, fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking, navigating a changing financial landscape, and building a culture of philanthropy and partnership. He emphasized the importance of maintaining public trust and institutional autonomy amid global challenges, noting that universities worldwide face skepticism, funding pressures, and governance constraints.

President Stoicheff highlighted the launch of the Slogotski Hunt Centre for Entrepreneurship, designed to embed innovation and entrepreneurial thinking across all disciplines. He stressed that excellence cannot rely solely on provincial operating grants, underscoring the need for diversified revenue streams and partnerships. The success of the recent comprehensive campaign, which raised \$571 million—the largest in Saskatchewan's history—was celebrated as a testament to strong community confidence in the university's mission. He also pointed to significant research milestones, including five new Royal Society of Canada inductees, multiple Order of Merit recipients, and the 50th anniversary of VIDO.

President Stoicheff urged senators to act as ambassadors for the university, promoting its value proposition and achievements within their communities. He emphasized that continued advocacy and engagement are essential to sustaining momentum in research, student success, and societal impact. By championing the university's strengths and priorities, senators play a critical role in ensuring USask remains a leader in education, innovation, and service to the province and beyond.



Questions

A senator asked about the recent Maclean’s university rankings, noting that USask ranked 14th out of 15 in its category. The question focused on how senators should respond when community members raise concerns about these rankings and whether they accurately reflect the university’s value. President Stoicheff acknowledged the limitations of such rankings, explaining that they often rely on narrow metrics and fail to capture USask’s unique strengths, such as research impact and community engagement. He encouraged senators to emphasize achievements and broader contributions when addressing these concerns.

Another question sought clarification on the 23 new research chairs mentioned in the President’s report. The senator asked whether these chairs were permanent endowments or term-limited positions. President Stoicheff explained that the chairs include a mix of both models—some funded through endowments that generate ongoing support, and others funded for fixed terms (e.g., 10 years) through major gifts. He highlighted that these positions strengthen research capacity and attract top talent.

A senator raised a question about balancing the university’s emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation with its commitment to the humanities and social sciences. The concern was whether these disciplines risk being undervalued in an economy-driven agenda. President Stoicheff responded by affirming the critical role of humanities and social sciences in addressing global challenges, such as political polarization and social cohesion. He stressed that innovation is not limited to technology but includes social innovation, and the new entrepreneurship center will engage all disciplines.

4. Engagement Session

Advocacy in the Context of Political and Social Shifts

This session was led by Sarah Daniels, Associate Vice President of Government Relations, who outlined how universities must adapt advocacy strategies to align with current government priorities—economic growth, productivity, housing, health care, affordability, and federally, defense and sovereignty. She stressed the need for non-partisan, long-term approaches that highlight universities’ contributions to workforce development, food security, and innovation. Advocacy was described as a “long game” built on relationships and impact stories rather than transactional requests, and senators were encouraged to act as ambassadors by sharing examples of the university’s societal contributions to ensure continued relevance amid shifting expectations.

Panel Discussion Highlights

The panel featured Dr. Aaron Genest (Member-at-Large), Kirsten Marcia (Appointed Member, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce), and Dr. Shankar Das (Appointed Member, Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists).

- Dr. Aaron Genest emphasized the link between innovation, productivity, and primary research, noting that Canada faces a national productivity challenge. He encouraged that universities should frame research as the foundation for economic growth and workforce development, highlighting the importance of interdisciplinary skills—combining technical expertise with liberal arts—to meet industry needs.



- Kirsten Marcia discussed navigating political realities in large-scale projects, using her geothermal energy initiative as an example. She stressed the need for adaptability, explaining how her project evolved to align with shifting government priorities around affordability, reliability, and economic impact. Her remarks underscored the importance of listening to government signals and positioning university partnerships as solutions to provincial and federal goals.
- Dr. Shankar Das focused on agriculture’s critical role in Saskatchewan’s economy and global food security. He highlighted the university’s responsibility to produce not only graduates but engaged citizens who understand societal challenges. Shankar encouraged stronger community outreach and engagement with growing immigrant populations, positioning USask as a leader in sustainability and innovation in agriculture.

The discussion reinforced that senators can play a vital role by sharing impact stories, advocating for the university’s contributions to health care, resource development, and technology, and building bridges between the university and the communities they represent.

Senators worked in their tables and online to work through the questions posed for their input.

5. Senate Committee Reports

MOTION – (Richet/Drever) – That Senate move *in camera*.

CARRIED.

5.1. Honorary Degrees Committee

MOTION – (Drever/ Bedard-Haughn) – That Senate move out of the *in camera* session.

CARRIED.

5.2. Nominations Committee

Robert Henderson, chair of the Nominations Committee, introduced this item and highlighted the work of the committee thus far. The committee had made appointments to Search Committees that were required by the Provost’s office. In addition, he introduced that the committee will be looking to make a call for expression of interest in the new year and that there will be additional information required to match the committee needs.

5.2.1. Nominations to Senate Engagement Committee

MOTION – (Henderson/Drever) – That Senate approve the appointments to the Senate Engagement Committee, effective immediately.

CARRIED.



5.3. Education Committee

Robert Henderson, chair of the Education Committee, reported changes to the admissions qualifications for the Master of Physician Assistant Studies program. Looking ahead, the committee plans to explore policies on incorporating CVs into admissions and the use of situational judgment tests (e.g., CASPER) to strengthen admissions processes. These initiatives aim to enhance Senate's engagement with academic policy development. The committee also engaged with Dr. Nancy Turner to review academic policies related to courses, assessment, and delivery.

A senator asked about the project to revisit student assessment policies and procedures, noting public concerns about grade inflation and consistency in grading. Dr. Marjorie Delbaere explained that this review has been ongoing for approximately three years, focusing on the Academic Courses Policy and assessment practices. The goal is to ensure clarity, consistency, and adaptability to technological changes while maintaining academic integrity. Extensive consultations have occurred, and further input from associate deans and faculty is being sought before implementation. The policy aims to balance flexibility with fairness and provide clearer guidance for instructors and students.

5.4. Membership Committee

Note: This item was presented for information.

5.5. Senate Engagement Working Group

Tamara Buckwold, Chair of the Senate Engagement Committee, reported that the Senate Engagement Working Group met regularly over the past year to advance the 2022 Senate Engagement Plan. The group developed a Senate purpose statement, a definition of engagement, and the terms of reference that enabled the creation of the new standing Senate Engagement Committee. She noted that the working group identified several priorities to support senator effectiveness, including enhanced onboarding with experienced senators, clearer resources and expectations for senators, more interactive approaches to Senate meetings, and improved pathways for communication between senators, their constituencies, and relevant university units. These recommendations, along with the foundational work completed, have been transferred to the newly established Senate Engagement Committee for continued development and implementation.

5.6. Executive Committee

University Secretary Julian Demkiw thanked all the chairs of the committees and all the committee members. Secretary Demkiw explained the role of the Executive Committee, noting that its primary responsibilities continue to be the approval of Senate agendas and oversight of any required bylaw or policy changes. He highlighted that the committee discussed potential updates related to non-academic student discipline, which will return to Senate at a future meeting. He also noted that, to balance workload and strengthen governance, the Committee assigned Executive Committee members to serve as liaisons to

various Senate committees, recognizing that the Chancellor—who chairs the Executive Committee—sits on many committees already. No additional substantive items were brought forward, and the Committee remains focused on ensuring effective coordination of Senate’s governance work.

6. Governance and Administrative Reports

6.1. Report on Board of Governors Activities

Board member Mike Marsh reported that the Board of Governors met in June, September, and October to address key governance, financial, and strategic matters. The June meeting confirmed updates to standing committee memberships, approved senior administrative compensation adjustments, advanced several capital projects, and received pension and audit-related reports. In September, the Board reviewed the Provincial Auditor’s integrated audit, approved the university’s audited financial statements and annual financial report, and endorsed the formal response to the Auditor’s letter. The October meeting, held at the Prince Albert campus, included engagement with local stakeholders, updates on USask Land Trust developments, discussion of financial pressures related to declining international enrolment, planning related to the stone barn and Seminary Crescent lands. Board member Marsh reaffirmed his commitment to representing Senate effectively and emphasized the importance of continued communication between the Board and Senate.

6.2. Report on University Council Activities

Rory Picklyk reported on behalf of himself and Susa Papp, the Senate-appointed non-voting members of University Council, noting that Council meets monthly and remains highly engaged in academic governance. He highlighted Council’s ongoing focus on academic program quality, student experience, campus safety, and broader social issues affecting students, including food and housing insecurity and anticipated changes related to the new transit system. He also emphasized the strong participation of the GSA and USSU in Council deliberations, as well as the consistent responsiveness of university administration. Picklyk noted that a substantial portion of Council’s work occurs at the committee level before items reach Council for decision, and he encouraged future Senate participation in this important governance body.

6.3. Non-Academic Student Discipline

University Secretary Julian Demkiw reported that Senate holds statutory responsibility for non-academic student discipline under The University of Saskatchewan Act, including the authority to establish bylaws related to admonishment, suspension, expulsion, and fines. He noted that the governance office continues to serve as the final point of appeal for non-academic matters and is modernizing related processes and data management with the support of new staff. Over the past year, 11 formal complaints were submitted, with an estimated 40 additional inquiries received. Julian emphasized the university’s growing use of alternative dispute resolution approaches—such as facilitated discussions and mediation—to



resolve matters before they escalate to formal hearings. He also indicated that future updates to policies and procedures will be brought to Senate as work progresses.

6.4. Strategic Enrolment Management

Interim Provost Patty McDougall provided an update on the university's Strategic Enrolment Management work, noting that fall enrolment is stable overall, with strong domestic and self-declared Indigenous student numbers and continuing declines in international enrolment at both undergraduate and graduate levels. She outlined progress on developing an agile five-year SEM plan focused on enrolment sizing, student progression, graduation outcomes, and the full student life cycle—from prospective student outreach to workforce entry. McDougall highlighted the integration of SEM with resource allocation, ongoing 2030 enrolment projections, annual SEM consultations, and alignment with strategic planning, government reporting, and academic program review.

Senate participated in a facilitated engagement exercise to provide early input into priorities for the SEM plan, which will return to Senate for approval once complete.

7. Closing

7.1. Other Business and Question Period

Senator Rhonda Gough raised two inquiries. First, she asked about the handling of surplus food from campus events and whether unused food is donated rather than discarded. Vice-President Administration Greg Fowler responded that pre-consumer organics are currently composted, some food is donated depending on the unit, and a review will be undertaken to clarify practices across campus.

Second, she requested clearer access to gender-based enrolment data by college. Interim Provost confirmed that such data exist within institutional dashboards and committed to improving senator access and offering demonstrations if helpful. No additional questions or items of other business were brought forward.

7.2. Adjournment

Chancellor Banda acknowledged President Peter Stoicheff for his service and thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting was properly adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Senate attendance, October 25, 2025

Appointed Members		District Members		Ex Officio Members	
A.J. Fox	P	Eric Wilmot	P	Jane Alcorn	Z
Aly Bear	A	Wade Hainstock	A	Angela Bedard-Haughn	P
Amanda Lepage	Z	Alishia Beach	P	Brett Vandale	P
Amee Joshi	R	Cheryl Lee Vertefeuille	P	Michael Bradley	P
Andrew Loken	Z	Karen Mitzel	P	Danielle Brittain	P
Andy Allen	Z	Sebastian Prost	R	Keith Willoughby	R
Gerald Albers	Z	Scott Barrant	P	Debby Burshtyn	P
Beverly Balaski	R	Faith Nash	P	Loleen Berdhal	A
Blair Cummins	P	Garfield Hnatiuk	R	Marjorie Delbaere	P
Brenda Mishak	A	Cathy Wheaton	A	Salome Reis	P
Darryl Bazylak	Z	Mark Guidinger	P	Blaine Favel	A
David Mandeville	P	Paula Marsh	Z	Sarah Forgie	P
David Schleich	R	Karen Mosier	P	Greg Fowler	P
Dean Weninger	R	Eryn Siba	P	Cheryl Hamelin	P
Dean Zimmer	Z			Robert Harasymchuk	Z
Elizabeth Rackow	R	Members at Large		William Harrison	A
Gail May-Melin	P	Aaron Genest	P	Angela Jaime	R
Hélène Grimard	P	Audrey Hestand	P	Iain Luke	R
Jane MacLeod	Z	Janice Paslawski	P	Bernon Lee	P
Jodie Mirosovsky	A	Bruce Richet	P	Jeromey Martini	A
Johanna Bergerman	P	Jessica Luc	P	Grit McCreath	A
Kathy Gable	P	Jordan Robertson	P	Patti McDougall	P
Kent Peterson	A	Kyle Drever	P	Peggy McKercher	A
Keshia Caplette	P	Lorne Vanin	P	Louise Michaud	A
Kimberly Greyeyes	P	Monica Iron	P	Brooke Milne	Z
Kirsten Marcia	P	Rhonda Gough	P	Gillian Muir	R
Laurianne Gabruch	A	Robert Henderson	P	Julia Paulson	P
Letitia Russell	R	Scott Gust	Z	Michael Pawelke	A
Pamela Meiers	P	Tamara Buckwold	P	Vera Pezer	A
Rebecca Newson	Z	Zsuzsa Papp	P	Martin Phillipson	R
Daniel Burke	P			Meghna Ramaswamy	Z
Roberta Gallagher	Z	Student Members		Solina Richter	P
Kendra Townsend	P	Chang Ge	A	Roy Romanow	A
Rory Picklyk	P	Brock Neufeldt	P	Baljit Singh	R
Sandeep Sharma	A	Jasmin Luu	P	Walter Siqueira	P
Shankar Das	P	Palash Roy	P	Lori Birrel	P
Sharon Garratt	R	Sharon Jacob	Z	Carl Still	R
Terry Lebiel	R	Ritu Patel	P	Peter Stoicheff	P
Brett Kitchen	P	Spencer Possberg	P	Scott Walsworth	R
James Rugg	P	<i>A = Absent</i>		Scott Banda	P
		<i>P = Present</i>		Ken Cheveldayoff	A
		<i>R = Regrets</i>		Non-Voting Member	
		<i>Z = Zoom</i>		Julian Demkiw	P