Chair’s Opening Remarks to University Council – June 18, 2020

We acknowledge that Council meets on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respects to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of our gathering place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

As this is our last meeting with the current group of Council Chairs, I want to begin by thanking all of them for the excellent work they have undertaken in the past year. It is important that they be recognized for the untold hours of leadership and their ability to respond to ever-changing situations. They do so much behind the scenes and how they are able to maintain the focus of their work always amazes me. I have the pleasure of engaging with the group often, and in some circumstances daily or weekly, and I can assure members of Council that in these interactions the group of Chairs has always done their best to represent the interests of the University and its Council.

I also want to extend a thank-you to the members of Council for their engagement and participation in the past year. We are unable to function as a body without your commitment. Standing for nomination, accepting a position, and participating in meetings, both electronically and in person, signals to the rest of the university your dedication to the University of Saskatchewan. Without your commitment we, as a Council, do not function.

In terms of business there is information about the Research Scholarly and Artistic Works and Teaching Learning and Academic Resource Committees that I wish to share. Due to annual turnover and resignations, memberships gaps on both committees were filled with individuals whose terms extend past the needs of the committees. What this means is that we have one extra elected RSAW and one extra elected TLARC member. Council approved adding these members, even though the bylaws state that only nine for RSAW and eleven for TLARC are required. The Coordinating Committee is suggesting to keep the extra members on as "other voting members" for the year. I felt it was important to share these developments in my chair’s remarks for the sake of transparency.

The June 10 PEC/Council Chairs “virtual” breakfast meeting was focused on the plan to transition to Fall 2020. We welcomed AVP Research, Darcy Marciniuk, to discuss the work of the Pandemic Response and Recovery Team, specifically the “Fall 2020 Hybrid Scenario Implementation Plan”. The conversation was focused on a number of aspects of the plan important to faculty and to University Council. The meeting was so valued that both groups have agreed to a follow-up meeting to further discuss the plan.

I am so pleased with the work we have undertaken as a Council this past year and what we have accomplished together. What started out as a seemingly regular year (as if such a thing exists) transitioned into one of the biggest challenges we have faced as an institution. Council’s ability to continue the necessary governance work during the COVID -19 Pandemic is an accomplishment that each one of us may share with great pride.

In conclusion, I thank the individuals who at a foundational level make our University Council such a success. The support from Secretary Chelsea Willness, Jacquie Thomarat, Michelle Kjargaard, and Amanda Storey permits me to engage fully in my role as Council Chair. They are dedicated, constant, and open-minded individuals with whom I am privileged to serve.

Regards,
Jay Wilson, Council Chair