TO: University Council

FROM: Russell Isinger, University Registrar

DATE: June 12, 2020

RE: Question About Late Payment Penalty.

A Council member inquired as to tuition fee penalties. He requested that the University not levy penalties on late tuition payments; moreover, he suggested that we should advertise that we are a university that does not.

Russell Isinger, University Registrar responded that his office reviews such policies regularly. Penalties encourage payment and are not out of step with other universities. He committed to further examining the financial and historic reasons for penalties on late tuition payments at USask and reporting back to Council [Table 1. Action 2].

Council may not be aware that the Student Accounts functions moved from Financial Services to the Registrar’s Office in 2015 are now managed by Student Finance and Awards, University Registrar’s Office, Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience.

As I mentioned at the Council meeting where this question was raised, late payment penalties exist to encourage payment by the stated deadlines to ensure a predictable flow of tuition and fees essential to the finances of this institution, and to support organizations within the university who depend on payment of fee revenue for their operations (for example, Recreation and Athletics, Student Wellness and Services, students’ unions, The Sheaf, etc.). We also operate under instructions from the Board of Governors to keep bad debt at a reasonable level. It is unrealistic that any institution or organization wanting to ensure a predictable flow of revenue would do away with late payment penalties entirely.

Considering the current COVID-19 pandemic, the U of S suspended as of April 2020 the late payment penalty on all student accounts for the time being. The decision regarding whether we will again charge a late payment penalty in the fall is under
consideration. In addition, and with a longer-term view, Student Finance and Awards is currently reviewing the late payment penalty interest rate to determine whether it should be changed to a different model as part of a broader review of our financial policies related to student accounts. It is important to note that we also have the practice of waiving the late payment penalty under certain circumstances (e.g., delays in receiving financial aid that is beyond a student’s control).

Yours respectfully,

Russell Isinger, University Registrar