

2026 ASPA Satisfaction Survey: Summary Report

April 2026

In order to better understand how well ASPA is meeting the needs of their members and achieving its current objectives, ASPA members were invited to complete a survey regarding various aspects of the association. Feedback will help determine the membership’s priorities, current strengths, and areas for improvement.

An online survey was developed by members of the ASPA research committee and reviewed/approved by the ASPA executive. ASPA members were invited to complete the survey from February 3rd to 23rd, 2026. A total of 556 members participated, representing a 32% response rate (see Appendix A for a description of the participants).

Presented in the report are average ratings for this year’s survey as well as the satisfaction survey conducted in October, 2023 and February 2005 (averages are based on a 5-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). Key themes are presented for the open-ended questions.

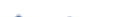
1. Rights and Benefits

	2023 Average Rating	2025 Average Rating	2026 Average Rating	Trend	Increased in 2026?
I understand my rights as an ASPA member	3.84	3.81	3.83		☒
I understand the ASPA Collective Bargaining Agreement	4.00	3.92	3.91		☐
I understand my Sunlife Benefits package	4.11	4.17	4.18		☒
I know who to contact if I have a grievance to bring forward to ASPA	3.31	3.31	3.43		☒

2. Membership with ASPA

	2023 Average Rating	2025 Average Rating	2026 Average Rating	Trend	Increased in 2026?
I feel supported by ASPA	3.74	3.65	3.74		
I feel heard by ASPA	3.63	3.52	3.63		
I feel respected by ASPA	3.83	3.75	3.79		

3. Labour Organization & Solidarity

	2023 Average Rating	2025 Average Rating	2026 Average Rating	Trend	Increased in 2026?
I believe ASPA should act in solidarity with other labour organizations	3.60	3.54	3.64		
I support a portion of my dues being set aside for ASPA to support broader labour causes in the province	3.06	3.02	3.18		
I would like ASPA to connect me to news, information, and events arising from affiliated and nearby labour organizations in the province	3.13	3.11	3.06		

4. Strengths

Based on comments from 234 respondents, the following key themes emerged when asked about strengths of ASPA.

Key Themes and Number of Responses		Quotes
ASPA Communication	118	
- Frequent, clear, concise updates - Appreciation for newsletters, "Did you know" emails, and bargaining updates - Members feel informed and connected - Notable improvement over recent years		"Communication has been very good lately and improved in recent years." "Great communication in keeping members informed." "I like the regular newsletter updates. I appreciate the work that ASPA does."
Bargaining and Negotiation	63	
- Strong trust in bargaining team - Appreciation for salary increases aligned with inflation - Recognition of difficult negotiation context - Members feel well represented		"Bargaining has been strong and has benefitted members." "The last bargaining cycle did exceptionally well for us — yay and thank you."
Engagement, Community, and Events	41	
- Social events (pizza lunches, winter social) highly valued - Appreciation for connection opportunities - Members enjoy feeling part of a community		"The social events are well attended, and I appreciate the effort that goes into them!" "I appreciate the social events and the sense of community they create."
Benefits and Compensation	32	
- Appreciation of benefits package		"The benefits package. It feels very comprehensive and supports my wellbeing."

- Recognition of improvements from bargaining - Value placed on health, wellness, and work-life balance supports		"They protected our benefits on the last negotiation which is very important and I appreciate that." "I feel supported by my workplace with work-life balance; reduced stress due to salary continuance for sick days, personal days to support my children."
Member Support and Advocacy - Members feel protected and supported - Appreciation for representation in difficult situations - Recognition of fairness and professionalism	27	"ASPA represented me to the employer when I could not represent myself. I am truly grateful." "Supportive, provides thought-out explanations, responds quickly to emails."
Professional Development and Mentorship - Mentorship program praised - Lunch & learn and educational sessions valued - Desire for more frequent offerings	22	"The mentorship program was also such a good experience for me." "Lunch and learns are helpful... we need more of those."
Inclusion of Distributed/Off-Site Staff - Members notice increased outreach - Appreciation for being included in events and communication	9	"ASPA has greatly improved at representing and connecting off site membership..."
General Satisfaction - Many members feel things are running smoothly - ASPA seen as transparent, stable, and supportive	18	"Everything seems to be running smoothly."

5. Areas for Improvement

Based on comments from 201 respondents, the following key themes emerged when asked about areas for improvement.

Key Themes and Number of Responses	Quotes
ASPA Communication 49 - Who to contact for support - Timely responses to member inquiries - Increased awareness of ASPA - ASPA information more accessible - Flow chart for some ASPA processes - ASPA executive updates	"Outlining support structures for union-related grievances. It is currently very unclear how a member initiates contact for union support." "Communicating with members and responding to inquiries from employees. I contacted ASPA executives twice, but never got a reply back." "Creating more awareness of the reason for ASPA and it's benefits, so that newcomers to the university workspace can be more aware and involved." "A summary of what ASPA has achieved on a quarterly or yearly basis may be a good idea."
Benefits 36 - Increase to benefits - Communication about benefits/how to use them - Work/life balance benefits (EDOs, 4-day work weeks, remote work, use of personal days)	"Work with the employer to update the limits on the benefits to reflect the realities of this decade." "More "did you know" or reminders to use benefits like personal days, APEFs, personal spending accounts." "I would strongly like them to bargain for EDOs. I work with several other people in workplace who are in similar positions with similar benefits/wages, except I am the only one without an EDO." "Will there be a way to discuss a 4-day work week (with evidence showing an increase in productivity)?"

Salary	30	"Cost of living increases. We get incremental pay raises based on the collective agreement while cost of living continues to rise every year." "Having an agreement with the university that allows for salaries in one position to grow (exceeding cost of living increases) without having to move from position to position in order to get a raise." "I am underpaid in comparison to other professionals. I am unsure how job families are determined..." "salary bands are so restrictive that is prevents good employees from getting paid what they deserve."
Bargaining Timeline and Strategy	29	"Earlier and more engaged bargaining, including collecting information from members on what priorities should be." "ASPA could improve by increasing transparency around decision-making processes and providing more timely, detailed updates during negotiations and key organizational changes." "Contracts are consistently settled 12 months + after the end of the last agreement, which typically results in the first year being a 0% adjustment and a small signing bonus, over several agreements this causes salaries to remain lower than they should have been. Bargaining should start at least 9 months prior to the end of the existing contract and ideally be ratified within 3 months of the end of the existing contract." "In comparison to the Faculty's union who have significantly more expertise, I think ASPA is at a natural disadvantage. They can draw from Biz and Law and consequently have a stronger team. I'd like to see ASPA invest in more professional help for the bargaining process."

		"With bargaining coming up, there should be a social media and general media campaign to let the broader committee know who ASPA is and why we are integral to the operations of the university."
Merit System Structure and Fairness - Better merit process - Eliminate merit system - Bring back "add to base" merit"	22	"I felt the past year's merit program was administered unfairly; there seems to be inconsistency with how money's are doled out to ASPA employees. Maybe more regulations, oversight or program overhaul is required." "ASPA at times seems to be eliminating items in the agreements that were essential to salary advancement (particularly for early career individuals) (add to base merit awards), while not gaining anything significant in return. I strongly feel a return to add to base merit awards is necessary for high quality employee retention, particularly early in careers." "Merit could be improved. I would appreciate it if ASPA could bring back 'adds to base' merit."
Union Education, Onboarding, and Networking - Onboarding new ASPA members - Networking opportunities to increase member engagement - Lunch & Learns about the agreement and what a union does - Engaging with satellite sites	21	"Have a meeting once to twice a year to meet with all members and see if there are currently any concerns or items that could be clarified." "Creating more awareness of the reason for ASPA and it's benefits, so that newcomers to the university workspace can be more aware and involved." "Social events feel too broad - could we do some targeted at specific groups within ASPA? Narrow things down a bit and connect with people doing similar work?"
Use of Union Fees - Social events - Member appreciation	7	"Spending money on social events and swag is not good value for funds." "I would like to see an annual welcome back/appreciation lunch for all members with a speaker and prizes for attending."

- Union fee amount		"How much of the union fee is taken out of the salary?"
Other	10	"We desperately need a better mix of ETF's in our pension funds - not sure why the current USask representatives are not including an Emerging Markets fund at least."
- More professional development opportunities (2)		
- Union solidarity (2)		"Are we doing enough to recognize the impact of AI on our membership's jobs?"
- Impact/use of AI (2)		
- Pension funds		"ASPA could further strengthen its impact by expanding advanced and role-specific professional development, particularly for mid- to senior-level professionals seeking deeper leadership, strategic, and systems-level learning."
- Support casual employers		
- Support other labour movements		
- Involvement in major USask processes (e.g., job architecture project)		

6. Lunch & Learn

When asked about suggestions for future Lunch & Learn sessions, the following key themes emerged, based on comments from 103 respondents.

Key Themes and Number of Responses	Quotes
What ASPA Does - Union services - What the executive and staff members do - Get to know the executive - ASPA budget and fees - ASPA committees - ASPA vs exempt employees - Labor history	15 "Education on what ASPA Executive is working towards and where our .8% goes towards." "I think a presentation outlining what the different executive roles do for the members would be informative. What is the difference between the president and the MSO for example." "A lunch and learn educating about all the different ASPA sub-committees and what they do, might be helpful to encourage folks to participate in these groups/roles."
Benefits	14 "Learn more about maximizing benefits" "A detailed review of the processes involved in applying for short-term and long-term disability." "How to expand or add to possible benefits."
Collective Agreement - Getting to know your agreement - Changes to the collective agreement - Rights as an ASPA member	14 "Know Your Collective Agreement (CA): A series breaking down specific articles (e.g., leave policies, overtime, discipline) in an accessible way." "Break down of salary band, job phase, ASPA family" "Sessions on some the topics under article 9, 19 & 20 of the collective agreement"
Bargaining - Bargaining updates - Determining issues important to members	12 "Future sessions should focus on bargaining updates because that is what most members are thinking about right now."

- Discussion points for new contract - What to expect during bargaining		"Once bargaining starts, what sorts of things are being brought to the table and discussed." "Collective Bargaining process, specifically, how information from members is gathered during the process, and how it is determined which voices/input is actioned by the bargaining team."
Grievances - How the process works - How to escalate a complaint - Who to reach out to at ASPA	8	"Navigating Grievances: Explaining the difference between a complaint and a grievance, and the steps in the grievance procedure." "Who to reach out to for grievances. How grievances are handled."
Pension Information/Retirement Planning	8	"Maybe focus a session on people with upcoming retirements (next 5-10 years). Discuss issues like old worker discrimination, accommodations for being laid off late in one's career, etc." "Pension with information for younger members, I'm not sure that many in my age group (younger than 40) recognize the importance of a pension and why we want to ensure that we're getting a good deal in the new agreement."
Career Paths, Growth, Leadership	7	"Leadership development for professional staff, featuring short panels or peer stories at different career stages." "Career progression within the institution"
Health & Wellness, Safety	7	"Supervisor safety requirements and updates to the provincial OHS legislation" "Dietitian for sedentary lifestyle jobs."
Work/Life Balance	7	"Remote, hybrid, and flexible work" "Workload concerns. What to do when your workload is unreasonable and nothing is being done to support you."

Communication Skills	6	"Working with Different Personalities (Faculty, Admin, Students)" "Navigating complex collaborations and power dynamics (e.g., working across units, with faculty, or in community-engaged and Indigenous partnerships)"
Conflict Management	6	"I would like to suggest conflict mediation strategies that could prevent turnover at university units." "Maybe to learn more about conflict resolution and microaggression, efforts to keep a healthy environment at work"
Merit	6	"Merit - Why Do We Have To Self Report" "Promotion and the merit process and how to do a merit submission."
Position Changes	4	"How will ASPA be pushing to use the new process of job classification to ensure that members always have a clear idea of what a job pays and ensure that no ASPA member will lose wages when moving between jobs in the same pay range." "Status/Position/Union Changes and associated transition processes."
Leaves	3	"It'd be great to have more sessions around leaves, as long as what is communicated is consistent with how HR and the employer is enforcing things." "Educational leaves or Deferred Salary Leave" "More information on Special leave with full pay"
Professional Development/APEF	3	"Use of APEF (professional development funds)"
USask Classes/Courses	3	"Learning opportunities offered by the University, classes and courses you can sign up for like first aid or similar." "The process when a ASPA member wants to take a course at USask"

Other	10	"Use Campus Experts: Ask members within the union to present on their areas of expertise" "How to use AI - how will AI affect our futures" "Would love more indigenous content and learning for non-indigenous members" "Operational overview of the university finances--as a public institution, we see money come in, where does it go?"
- Use of AI (2) - Project management (2) - EDI initiatives at USask - Indigenous content/learning - Member presentations - New member orientation refresher - Member town hall - University finances		

7. Additional Comments

A total of 78 respondents provided additional comments. Key themes are listed below.

Key Themes and Number of Responses	Quotes
Appreciation - Thanking the executive - Appreciate opportunity to provide feedback	38 "I really appreciate all the work the Committees and Executive do on our behalf. Thank you!" "Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I appreciate the work ASPA does to support members and value ongoing efforts to communicate and engage with the membership."
Merit System - Improvements	4 "Overhaul the merit system." "I am hopeful that merit increases will be brought back under the new collective agreement."
Compensation - 4-day work week - Job position phases	4 "It's hard to get employees bigger raises, what about thinking about all of us going to 4 day work week?" "With architectural structure of positions occurring on campus, fight for more phase 3s. They used to exist as a pathway for continued career trajectory but disappeared (i.e. those positions are now scarce on campus)." "We are noting they are hiring phase 1's to replace phase 2's..." "Please fight for better yearly increases."
Negotiations - Survey about members' needs/priorities - Keep members updated	3 "It would be amazing to have some sort of survey come out for union employees to mention their wants and needs and priorities of their

		benefits so ASPA can take note of everyone and try to find the best balance of benefits for everyone when bargaining." "I look forward to the updates on how negotiations are going with the upcoming collective agreement."
Other - Increase to benefits (2) - Union onboarding (2) - Needs of instructors (2) - Lower fees (2) - Hybrid work (2) - Job security (2) - Lower parking rates - More daycare spots on campus	14	"Raise the ASPA benefits - they barely support general maintenance and necessary medical care/services." "I would like ASPA to advocate for ASPA instructors to be paid for our prep time in addition to instructional hours. This is not a living wage." "I think ASPA should approach the university during bargaining to have more fair hybrid work polices as some ASPA members do not have this option." "ASPA union onboarding is a little light compared to CUPE - there should be more outreach to new ASPA members to ensure they feel included and informed and empowered to get involved." "I appreciate the website (https://aspasask.ca/). I would have loved to see a link, "New to ASPA? Start Here!" or something like that. A page that lets a newbie like me know at a glance, 'here's what you need to do as you get started in your new employment position...this is who we are, this is how you fit it, and here are the links you need to use'." "As a member of ASPA in a contract position, I like to be in a permanent position to support ASPA."

Appendix A: Description of Survey Respondents

Demographics	Categories	Percent	Number
ASPA Family (n = 439)	Specialist Professional	59%	261
	Information Technology	15%	68
	Managerial	11%	48
	Operational/Admin	8%	36
	Instructional	6%	26
Job Phase/Salary Band (n = 418)	One	28%	119
	Two	53%	221
	Three	19%	78
Number of Years Member of ASPA (n = 485)	Less than 1 year	11%	53
	1 - 5 years	35%	171
	6 - 10 years	22%	107
	11 - 19 years	18%	89
	20 - 29 years	11%	55
	30 years or more	2%	10
Primary Work Location (n = 483)	Saskatoon	97%	468
	Regina	2%	9
	Prince Albert	1%	2
Work Arrangement (n = 486)	Almost always in office/on campus	49%	239
	Hybrid	38%	186
	Almost always home/remote	13%	61

Demographics	Categories	Percent	Number
Age (n = 466)	20 - 30	7%	33
	31 - 40	29%	134
	41 - 50	33%	152
	51 - 60	24%	111
	61 - 70	7%	33
	Over 70	1%	3
Gender Identity (n = 466)	Woman	66%	307
	Man	33%	154
	Non-binary	1%	5



2026 Member Satisfaction Survey: Discussion Groups Report

1.0 Introduction & Rationale

ASPA conducts an annual “Satisfaction Survey” to capture the current thoughts and opinions of its members around several areas such as rights, benefits, pay, solidarity, education, and areas for improvement. It was noted during a meeting of the ASPA Research Committee that quantitative questionnaire surveys can be enhanced by follow-on qualitative interviews with respondents. It was agreed that such data would be beneficial to the Satisfaction Survey and a pilot project was launched for 2026. The discussion groups were organised and implemented by a sub-committee of the ASPA Research Committee (Michaela Lynds, Simona Meier, Marla Rogers, and Cameron Bye) with support from Angeline Hainstock.

2.0 Methodology

Several interview methods and types of results analysis were discussed. After considering the resources available, it was decided to hold Semi-Structured Interviews, framed as Discussion Groups. Facilitators would guide these groups through discussion of four key areas that were identified by the questionnaire analysis. These were i) Benefits, ii) Merit System, iii) Education, Onboarding and Networking, and iv) Impact of AI. There would also be time allocated to allow participants to raise any other discussion points. Three sessions on different days and times were held to give multiple opportunities for members to attend around their availability. These were Session One: Tuesday April 7th from 2pm-3pm, Session Two: Thursday April 9th from 12pm-1pm and Session 3: Thursday April 9th from 3pm-4pm. Interest was good, with 16 registrations for Session One, 7 registrations for Session Two, and 7 registrations for Session Three.

It should be noted that due to the nature and objectives of discussion groups, the results contained within this report reflect only the personal views and experiences of those participating. It is not intended to be wholly representative of the ASPA membership.

3.0 Results

All three sessions went ahead as planned with a total of 10 participants, as several registered members cancelled.

3.1 Benefits

All the participants had a general awareness of the benefits available, with some having a more detailed understanding due to long-term employment in an ASPA role. However, there were still some knowledge gaps even in the latter, with one long-term employee advising that they only found out about personal days recently at an ASPA Lunch-&-Learn event. Many participants discussed that although the current health benefits offered through SunLife cover a good range of services, the dollar-amount limit on these services have not kept up the rising cost of these and is now woefully inadequate. This was particularly noted in two areas: Prescription Drugs and Paramedical Benefits (e.g. Massage). Many noted that they

regularly meet or go over the annual allowance each year, with two participants advising that they have medical conditions requiring expensive medication and had already used their annual allowance in early April. This is clearly concerning and not meeting the needs of our members. It is well established that financial concerns can have a negative impact on personal wellness and work productivity, so to have financial worries relating to a health condition intensifies this effect. One attendee felt that the university had forgotten about the main point of benefits – to increase productivity because employees would be getting the health services they need and not be worried about costs related to health.

Massage was also noted by several participants (with the majority agreeing) as an area where the current limit is severely underfunded. A general wellness massage in Saskatoon can currently cost around \$80 per session, with therapeutic/sport injury massages often being \$100+. The current limit of \$400 therefore allows approximately 4-5 sessions per year, clearly insufficient for a member with a medical need (e.g. bad back) who requires massage at least monthly. It was also noted that due to the long waiting period to see a family doctor or specialist, members are relying on the SunLife coverage to fill that gap. Using the bad back analogy again, a member waiting for an analgesic injection appointment may visit a massage therapist or acupuncturist to help alleviate some of the pain. One participant summarised the health benefits package as *“It’s great if you don’t need health benefits”*.

Several participants made comparisons of the ASPA benefits package with local industry benefit packages or other educational institutions (e.g. Sask Polytechnic). Whilst acknowledging that working in the Higher Education sector isn’t associated with “Gold Star” coverage, the differences were still felt to be significant. One participant noted that they had better benefits working in industry 20 years ago. It was widely agreed that the purpose of health coverage should be preventative rather than reactionary; to maximise the number of days staff are able to work, and so dollar-amount increases across the board need to be put in place to make this possible. Whilst discussing preventative health care, one participant added that they would like to see nutritionists/dieticians added to the coverage and several agreed that some more general awareness campaigns by ASPA around the wellness/health benefits available, as well as associated funds such as the Personal Spending Account (PSA), could only help. During this conversation it was also raised that the dollar-amount of the PSA also needs to be increased to reflect inflation.

Discussion around benefits also included work:life Balance and how the post-Covid years have affected work environments. Most participants were very supportive of allowing remote/hybrid working to remain, with no one disagreeing. It was felt to be a strong part of considering USask to be a positive place to work, with one participant stating that if they were made to return to the office full-time, they would leave and that they knew many felt the same way. It was argued that why would it be in USask’s interest to force staff into uncomfortable work environments (e.g., two people sharing an office where one likes it hot and one likes it cold, or negative atmospheres) when they can demonstrate equal or more production working remotely. Remote/hybrid working also positively affects the ongoing often-mentioned issue of lack of space on campus and many participants could think of spaces that have sat empty since 2020/21, as the occupants have not returned from working remotely, and could be used for other purposes. Another way of managing work:life Balance is using schemes such as Earned Days Off (EDOs) and flex time. These were not universally popular, though, and so it was suggested that rather than blanket introduction, more educational material should be made available to the membership to

advise that Article 9.3.2. (Alternative Work Hours Plan) of the current Collective Agreement states that such schemes should be an option to discuss.

Other topics raised but not discussed in detail were i) low number of vacation days, ii) more education around accessing the Physical Activity Complex (PAC) and that it is taxable income, iii) more education around any ancillary benefits the SunLife plan offers, e.g. discounts at restaurants, and iv) maternity top-up eligibility.

3.2 *Merit System*

The assessment of the current merit system was unanimously agreed to be flawed, with the majority believing it should be scrapped. Participants were particularly concerned about the lack of transparency, fair/standardised implementation across different departments, and the number of hours spent completing and reviewing the documentation. Several participants admitted that they have no idea how it works. One participant shared their experience of being awarded Merit after a year of incredibly hard and stressful work, stating that the amount they received was “*insulting*”. As a result, they lost any motivation to go ‘above and beyond’ in their role. Another participant shared how they were awarded Merit one year, but then the following month the car parking permit charges increased by the same amount, leaving them disheartened. This also reflects just how low the dollar-amount of Merit awards are.

Various options were discussed of how the system could be improved, including bringing back the Adds to Base, introducing a completely new system, overhauling the current system to ensure transparency and standardisation across departments, across-the-boards percentage increase, or removing merit altogether to improve other standard benefits. By far the most popular route was to bring back the Adds to Base model. Along with the current Merit system not being seen as a suitable reward, it was noted that it could have serious implications for retention as members start to realise that without an Adds to Base increment it will be extremely difficult for them to reach the top of their pay band.

3.3 *ASPA Onboarding, Education and Networking*

Members’ experiences with ASPA onboarding varied widely from those who received no onboarding, those who received a virtual onboarding, to others who received extensive in-person onboarding. It was felt that having a structured onboarding process that is standardised to ensure nothing is missed, is very important going forward. The timing of an onboarding process was also discussed, as it had previously been offered only once there were enough people to form a group. Although efficient for ASPA, this approach had the potential to be detrimental to members, leaving many people without onboarding for a long time if hiring was slow. One participant shared that they didn’t know about all the health benefits until they had been in the role for a significant time. It was suggested that there be a set schedule of onboarding sessions (e.g. once a month) that occur even if there is only one person attending, or that a comprehensive ASPA onboarding package is created that can be taken at any time. Several people noted that even with an online option, they would appreciate some kind of in-person welcome from ASPA that felt more meaningful. This would also be helpful in getting to know the ASPA staff and who to contact at the union to make the most of membership. It was asked if this could also include general USask benefits such as where the art galleries are, how to get Huskies tickets, the best places to eat, etc., as departmental onboarding quality varies.

Most people agreed that the current events and learning opportunities organised by ASPA are sufficient and beneficial. The 'Lunch & Learns' were mentioned as being especially useful, with the timing of every other month working well. One participant commented that they find it very difficult to network/socialise at ASPA events as there are often established cliques that can create an unwelcoming atmosphere. It was suggested that ASPA could help to alleviate this by planning this knowledge into the event organisation, e.g., allocating a table or space that would be low-pressure for people who would like to chat and get to know other members.

Several suggestions were put forward as potential events, including more town halls/general meetings to discuss issues members face or would like to see addressed, and increased education in areas such as the tuition waiver, the Collective Bargaining Agreement, what the committees do, how to get involved in volunteering with ASPA, and what is expected of you if you are interested in joining the Executive. One participant noted that they would like to see the mentorship program return for networking.

3.4 Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

All the participants had a general understanding of AI, with varying levels of concern regarding whether their current role could be replaced by it. Despite these differences, the majority agreed that it needs to be "*on the front burner*" for bargaining due to the uncertainty of any impacts. Several participants shared how they incorporated it into their daily work with positive effects such as improving text wording/phrasing, and noted that like it or not, it's here to stay. It was discussed how low-level tech jobs are likely to be the most affected, but most were confident that it could not replace humans in many other roles such as teaching, as it only repeats what humans have put online. This generated information may be incorrect, and it has also been known to make up responses, studies, papers etc. It was also noted that the advancement has many implications, including social, economic and environmental that should all be considered by a Higher Education institution.

Many agreed that the successful implementation of AI to the level where it may affect jobs will require extensive IT support, dedicated online security (hacking etc.) and cutting-edge technology and software, conditions that USask is unlikely to meet soon. However, there was serious concern that the employer may view AI as it is portrayed in the media and lay off a swath of staff, which would be disastrous for the institution. Most participants agreed that there should be some language in the new Collective Bargaining Agreement that covers employees if the employer decides to replace some or all their role with AI for any reason.

3.5 Other discussion points

A few other areas of interest emerged from the discussion groups, either as dovetails from the guided questions or being raised independently.

- i) One participant expressed thanks that ASPA had been great and made them feel seen. They had previously worked in an organisation that was anti-union and the difference had a huge impact on her wellness.

ii) It was noted that after the initial employment letter it can be difficult to find out your role scope, criteria etc. especially if you have moved through the structure. Could a matrix or links be added to the ASPA website to make this more easily accessible?

iii) Would it be possible to add links to relevant vacant roles being advertised in the ASPA newsletter or a new regular bulletin? Whilst discussing job postings, several participants noted that they had gone to apply for a role, but the posting had been removed before the stated closing date due to finding the right candidate or having enough candidates. Is this allowed? Could ASPA investigate?

iv) There was a request for more information to be available on the ASPA website and that a “Who’s Who” of staff and board/committee members would be very helpful.

4.0 Evaluation

The Discussion Groups were found to be incredibly valuable for providing an enhanced understanding of individual members experiences and perceptions of ASPA and the employer, and we would like to acknowledge the contributions of all those who participated. The sub-committee will be recommending to the ASPA Research Committee that qualitative data in some form is incorporated into the annual Satisfaction Surveys going forward. If approved, the sub-committee will then explore potential methodologies such as utilising more structured Focus Groups and statistical analysis which was not possible in 2026 due to time and resource limitations.