



Matthew Gowans, President
Jed Rasmussen, Vice-President
Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2023, 3:30 p.m.

[Zoom Meeting ID: 824 1109 2322, Passcode: 180732](#)

I. Call to Order & Roll Call (M. Gowans, J. Thomas)

The Senate was called to order at 3:34 p.m.

Senators Present: Matthew Gowans (Pres), Andrew Bahlmann, Adam Burningham,* Karen Carter,* Alan Christensen, Sandra Cox, Trent Fawcett, Wes Jamison, Jed Rasmussen (VP), Dennis Schugk*

Senators Absent: David Fullmer, Jeff Wallace

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), David Allred (Deans),* Melanie Jenkins (Provost),* Kade Parry (Asst. Provost)*

**Asterisks indicate those who joined remotely via Zoom for all or part of the meeting.*

II. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes have not yet been formalized, as it was the Parliamentarian's birthday and he decided to take a break. The minutes for January 25 will be available at the Senate's next meeting.

III. Informational Items

A. Updates from the Faculty Senate President (M. Gowans)

1. *Presidential Search Committee*

M. Gowans reported on the most recent search committee meeting, which included the USHE general counsel. He was impressed by the generosity of this individual, who added most of the recommendations from the committee to the job description. The job posting is now live at snow.edu/presidential-search, and will close March 10. The work of the committee in nominating 3-5 candidates to the Board of Trustees will conclude in late March or early April.

2. *Deans Council*

At the most recent Deans Council meeting, Micah Strait from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness talked about the Argos software, and how it is used by deans and department chairs to collect information about students. He is able to provide data on virtually any available metric. M. Gowans asked how it might be relevant for the Senate, and M. Strait reported that information could be readily available to the different Senate committees. M. Gowans believes that M. Strait could be an important resource for helping committee chairs and committees better understand Snow College students. This information may not be relevant to all committees, but it could be important for them to know.

Provost Jenkins pointed out that much of the data Senate committees may be interested in could already be available via institutional research. She encouraged senators to fill out the necessary form for data requests, which will be processed with both M. Strait and Becky Hermansen. Not all data will be accessible because of privacy and confidentiality laws.

M. Gowans noted that the Deans also discussed the workload release request form. Some \$50k is available for one-time use in a given year for individuals who might want a course release or stipend, such as members of the Senate leadership. The Qualtrics form will be launched

sometime in the future for faculty to apply for this money for Fall, Spring, or Summer. The deadline in the future will be in February. This due date may affect the ability of certain senators to serve as President or Vice-President, so future leadership elections may need to be held earlier in the Spring semester so elected faculty can plan their academic schedule.

B. Upcoming Senate and Senate-Administered Elections (J. Thomas)

Science & Math: Jed Rasmussen eligible for reelection

Business & Tech: Karen Carter eligible for reelection*

Fine Arts & Comm: David Fullmer eligible for full-term election

Adjuncts: Adam Burningham eligible for reelection**

Senate President & Vice-President will also be elected in due course

*Previous agenda had noted that K. Carter was ineligible for reelection because she recently switched from professional to tenure track and thus no longer has tenure equivalency. This would have been a problem because the two Senators from Business & Technology were both untenured. However, A. Christensen was recently awarded tenure beginning July 1, thus meeting Senate bylaw requirements to have at least one tenured senator from each division. As a result, K. Carter is eligible to serve another term.

**A. Burningham indicated his willingness to serve another term representing the adjunct faculty. The Senate will administer an election in the Fall for the adjunct faculty in which he will stand as a candidate.

M. Gowans will follow-up with the relevant deans to ensure that Senate elections will be completed soon.

IV. Senate Initiative Discussions

A. Policy #402 Revision: Academic Freedom Procedure (W. Jamison)

W. Jamison noted that his most recent revisions are complete, and that there will be a meeting with college legal counsel soon (the counsel has received the document via email).

B. Policy #403 Revision: Faculty Grievance Policy (M. Gowans)

More research needs to be done; the Senate will address this in the next meeting.

C. Policy #410 Revision: Advancement & Tenure (A. Bahlmann)

A. Bahlmann presented the most recent draft of Policy #410 in relation to accommodating returning faculty with previous tenure status or new faculty with tenure status at another institution.

Particular changes included replacing the final sentence in the previous draft by adding the following language at the end of item **2.18**: “A faculty member will typically be evaluated in their third and sixth year of service. These evaluations may occur sooner if a reduction in the tenure consideration period is approved.”

Language was also revised in **3.8.4** as follows: “Requests for a reduction in the tenure consideration period must be submitted to Academic Affairs within the first two years of full-time, tenure-track employment according to the tenure reduction schedule found in section 3.8.4.1 of this policy. However, submitting the reduction request earlier will allow for more reduction options. Examples of when the consideration period may be shortened include: (1) previous exemplary experience as documented as a full-time faculty member at accredited colleges or universities, including Snow College; (2) exemplary service as an administrator or staff member at Snow College; or (3) clearly meritorious reasons including tenure achieved at another institution. No faculty member may achieve tenure without at least one year of teaching as a faculty member at Snow College. Administrators and staff members being considered for tenure must demonstrate teaching proficiency before being awarded tenure.

If the consideration period is reduced, the review timeline for the tenure-track faculty member will be adjusted accordingly.”

A subsection of **3.8.4.1** was also added: “A faculty member may request a reduction for the following amounts: (1) a 1-year reduction (request must be received by the end of their fourth semester); (2) a 2-year reduction (request must be received by the end of their third semester); or a 3-year reduction (request must be received by the end of their first semester). For these three reduction options, the faculty member must undergo a full interim tenure review as well as a full final tenure review. If a 3-year reduction is granted, the final tenure review will conclude in the faculty member's third year of employment. If a 2-year reduction is granted, the final tenure review will conclude in the fourth year of employment. If a 1-year reduction is granted, the final tenure review will conclude in the fifth year of employment.”

(Some sentence-level revisions were noted in the new draft but are not recorded here.) D. Allred and Provost Jenkins noted that a discussion of the revisions would be included in the next Deans Council. J. Rasmussen commended both A. Bahlmann and the A&T Committee for completing the revisions in a timely manner.

Motion: To approve the revisions as made in the document and to forward it to the Deans for their input.

Made by J. Rasmussen; **2nd** by W. Jamison

Motion passed unanimously among senators present.

D. Shared Governance Subcommittee (Gowans, Rasmussen, Christensen)

The subcommittee has compiled a list of notes from its discussion with Deans Allred and Brenchley, and have presented the fruits of those discussions with the entire Deans Council. The discussions have focused on clarifying the role of the Senate as distinct from the Deans and Office of Academic Affairs (Provost).

M. Gowans expressed his understanding that the Senate is accountable to the general faculty who elect them, and not to the Deans or Academic Affairs. Similarly, he noted that while these three bodies hold each other accountable to some degree, that the Senate is not an administrative or a penalizing body. It

does not directly manage faculty affairs (such as budgets, though some Senate committees do oversee some expenditures).

Senators discussed these ideas at length as a continuation of dialogue on the role of the Senate for the past year. Some senators expressed that they would like to see the Senate as having more “legislative” or “administrative” authority, providing a “check” on administration, or at least that this was their impression of the Senate’s role when they were first elected to this body. The following points were among those raised during the conversation.

- Being a non-administrative body allows senators to be advocates for faculty outside of administration oversight and constraints. If there ever were an issue over which administration and faculty disagreed, the Senate would be the body to step in on behalf of the faculty at large. If the Senate were to have more administrative power, it would make the Senate less accountable to the faculty and more accountable to administrators and weaken its influence.
- Much of the Senate’s “power” and influence is exercised through its committees, which have significant decision-making power including advancement, tenure, sabbaticals, curriculum, UQI funding, etc. The potency here is more a concept of having “*power with*” rather than a “*power over.*” Committees are thus not “subservient to” the Senate (cf. Bylaws sections 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7).
- In relation to committees, the Senate “empowers” them to be able to make critical decisions. If that power were taken back, and the Senate itself called all the shots, that would constrain faculty voice. More is accomplished by empowering committees rather than having direct control in all matters dealing with faculty.
- The relationship between faculty and administration is not hierarchical but cooperative. If the Senate were placed on an organizational chart, it could have a dotted line to Academic Affairs, but this would not imply oversight. Senate leadership meets regularly with the Provost and the college President, but this consists of dialogue, not of one “reporting” to the

other or being “held accountable” or “called on the carpet.” This is the essence of shared governance.

- Among the most important roles played by the Senate is defending academic freedom, defined by Reichman (2021) as “not a civil right, as if freedom of speech, nor is it simply an individual employment benefit provided to those in a restricted number of academic appointments. It is, instead, a freedom belonging to the academic profession as a whole to pursue inquiry and teach freely, limited and guided by the principles of that profession. Academic freedom guarantees to both faculty members and students the right to engage in intellectual inquiry and debate without fear of censorship or retaliation. . . . [I]t functions ultimately as the collective freedom of the scholarly community to govern itself in the interest of serving the common good in a democratic society.” (3-4)

Near the end of the discussion, J. Rasmussen suggested that as a result of the discussions between the Shared Governance Subcommittee and the Deans that a formal memorandum of understanding be drafted. Once approved, it could then be posted publicly on the school website. This would help further clarify the distinct yet cooperative roles of Senate and administration, and help ensure that the fruits of these discussions will not be lost in long-term institutional memory.

V. Division & Committee Reports

A. GE Subcommittee (T. Fawcett)

T. Fawcett, representing the General Education Subcommittee (“GE”), invited the Senate to consider changing GE to “full committee” status, as opposed to it currently being a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee (CC). GE members would like to explore what doing so would mean for GE, and weigh the advantages and disadvantages. This conversation arose because the committee is revising its bylaws. (Any proposed revisions would then be approved by the CC and afterwards the Senate.)

The rationale for this change would be to eliminate one level of bureaucracy. The question is whether or not it is necessary to have the Curriculum Committee be

an intermediary, or whether GE should still be part of the CC. At this point, the question is only exploratory.

Provost Jenkins added that this conversation is happening statewide: *all* GE committees are reevaluating their relationship to CCs. This discussion is less potentially problematic for Snow because we mainly deal with two-year syllabi, whereas four-year schools have much more to consider.

Senators reached an informal consensus that GE should continue its explorations, and to keep the Senate informed of what is learned in the process. The Senate will be happy to give feedback.

B. Other Items of Discussion

J. Rasmussen presented an item of discussion proposed by Garth Sorensen, a faculty member from Science & Mathematics, that involved the Senate adopting a resolution in support of the Board of Trustees appointing a specific candidate as the new college president (with the understanding that the hiring process will continue regardless).

A. Bahlmann, who has informally polled some of the faculty, suggested his opinion that there is not enough faculty support college-wide to encourage the Senate to hold a vote on this matter. M. Gowans expressed his belief that this is not part of the role of the Senate, that such an action could create tension in the hiring process, and that such a measure could also discourage qualified candidates from applying. The faculty already has a voice in the process, through both he and Heidi Johnson, Faculty Association President, serving on the hiring committee and incorporating faculty feedback into the job advertisement (see Section III, Item A.1 of these minutes). Faculty will also have the opportunity to ask questions of the selected candidates in future public forums. A resolution also wouldn't necessarily sway the final decision, which rests with the Board of Trustees. If the established hiring process is followed, then the new president can have the confidence not only of the faculty, but other represented stakeholders as well.

Senators agreed that if an individual faculty member wanted to start a petition to the Board of Trustees to hire a preferred nominee, that they were welcome to do

so under their Constitutional right of free speech. However, no senator endorsed the idea of having the Senate vote on or adopt such a resolution, and no motion was made on the matter during this meeting.

V. Senate Orientation

A. Henry Reichman, *Understanding Academic Freedom* (2021)

Senators read the Introduction of Reichman's book and Chapter 1, which reviewed the history of academic freedom in the United States. The discussion actually took place earlier as recorded in Section IV, Item D, and was not addressed at this time.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: W. Jamison; **2nd:** J. Rasmussen

The Senate adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 22, 2023** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Attachments

Faculty Senate Roster, 2022-2023

Policy #410 Revision: Advancement & Tenure

Minutes taken by Jacob L. Thomas
Minutes approved February 22, 2023