



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

Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2024 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order

The Senate was called to order at 3:31 p.m.

Senators Present: Matthew Gowans (Pres.), Jed Rasmussen (VP), Alan Christensen, Sandra Cox, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Trent Fawcett, Wes Jamison, Dennis Schugk, Anita Slusser,* Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Karen Carter

*Anita Slusser, Faculty Association Secretary, is substituting for Jeff Wallace for the duration of the semester, as he is on sabbatical.

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian) David Allred (Assoc. Provost), M. Brenchley (Deans), Micahel Austin (Provost)

II. Minutes from Previous Meeting

A. Review of minutes from November 29, 2023

Motion to Approve: A. Larsen; **2nd:** D. Schugk

Approval: Unanimous of senators present with three abstentions: S. Cox, T. Fawcett, W. Jamison

III. Informational Items & General Questions

A. Amendments to Senate Bylaws 4.4 Concerning College Council Representation. J. Thomas noted that the following changes to the Senate bylaws were approved by the Senate on Nov. 29. The Senate also advised that language be created so that College Council representatives consider adjunct voices. The highlighted line at the end of the paragraph is the proposed text to address this.

Approved Revision: College Council Representative Selection: The College Council consists of representatives from faculty, staff, and students. The faculty composition includes the following voting members: Faculty Senate President; Faculty Association President; a dean; and two at-large, full-time faculty members. If the Senate President and/or Association President are unable to attend a meeting, another member of their respective committee will attend in their place. The College Council has tasked the Faculty Senate with selecting the two at-large faculty representatives on the committee. One at-large representative shall be from the Ephraim campus and the other from Richfield. The at-large positions are selected on a two-year rotating schedule. The Faculty Senate will hold campus-wide elections for the at-large position each Spring to begin the following academic year. **At-large representatives' responsibilities include the consideration of adjunct faculty voices.**

Approval. Senators verbally approved the changes. J. Thomas will soon ensure the new version of the bylaws posted on the relevant Senate web pages.

B. Upcoming Elections

1. At-Large College Council Representative—Richfield. J. Thomas noted that due to the change in the composition of the College Council and the faculty's representation on that body, Janalee Jeffrey has stepped down from her role on the College Council. Chad Price will continue to serve to the end of the academic year. An election needs to be held in the spring for this position. Chad Price is eligible to serve a second term. J. Thomas will be seeking nominations after Spring Break, unless otherwise advised by the Senate.

2. Expiring Senate Terms. The following divisions will need to hold Senate elections this semester. J. Thomas will contact the Deans and invite their divisions to hold elections this semester.

(a) Humanities - M. Gowans ineligible; concluding 2nd term

(b) Social Science - D. Schugk eligible for a 2nd term

3. Senate President & Vice-President. J. Thomas further indicated that J. Rasmussen will soon be vacating his roles on the Senate to serve as Asst. Chair of the Biology Dept. (and later to become the full chair). As such, a new Vice-President needs to be elected. Since the Senate will be holding an election for a new President and VP for next year soon anyway, the Senate leadership proposes the following:

(a) That the Senate hold elections for President and Vice-President for the 2024-2025 term by the next Senate meeting on Feb. 14.

(b) That the senator elected as next year's President will serve as the current Vice-President until June 30, 2024.

(c) That the duties of the next year's elected President and VP will begin on July 1, 2024.

Senators verbally assented to this process. J. Thomas announced that he will accept nominations for either of these positions immediately. Any senator who has served at least one year on the Senate by July 1 and who is tenured (or Professional Track Lv. 7) by that date is eligible to serve in either of these positions. The Faculty Association and Adjunct representatives are not eligible to serve. The following senators are thus eligible: **A. Christensen, S. Cox, T. Fawcett, W. Jamison, R. Keller, A. Larsen, D. Schugk.**

C. Updates from the Faculty Senate President

1. Meeting with the College President and Legislative Updates. M. Gowans noted that there was no regular meeting with the president, as his regular discussion with the president occurred the previous week.

(a) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs (HB261). Concerning the current state legislative session, M. Gowans reported that the Utah

legislature is close to ending Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs on public college campuses in the state. He suggested for faculty who may oppose this change that protesting with signs and picketing may not be effective. Instead, the focus should be on highlighting Snow's strengths and emphasizing general inclusivity as an open enrollment institution.

W. Jamison and others expressed concern about the state imposing unwanted obligations on the institution. M. Gowans clarified that the state's directives primarily impact institutional policies and hiring practices rather than teaching or classes. For instance, colleges can no longer require diversity statements in job postings. Some language adjustments to master syllabi may also be warranted. Senators disagreed on the long-term implications of the state bill.

Associate Provost D. Allred highlighted the need to rename the DIG committee and suggested exploring alternative ways to promote student success without relying on certain terms. W. Jamison, who chairs that committee, acknowledged that he and the committee are currently brainstorming.

(b) Resolution 103. M. Gowans reported that the pending Resolution 103 aimed to designate Utah as the accrediting institution rather than having an outside accreditor. He confirmed its passage and mentioned discussing it with Rep. Steven Lund before the legislative session began. Senators were concerned that not having outside accreditors would impact the viability of public college degrees in the state.

D. Allred expressed optimism about the resolution's potential challenges due to a contradiction: schools cannot opt-out of external accreditation and still receive federal funding.

2. UCSFL. M. Gowans reported that the discussions at the most recent UCSFL meeting largely mirrored ongoing issues. He highlighted Julie Hartley, Associate Commissioner of Academic Education, for her awareness of statewide faculty concerns. Interim Commissioner Geoffrey Landward has taken steps to mitigate the impact of the elimination of the DEI bill, acknowledging the challenging year

ahead for higher education due to budget constraints and tax cuts, along with the relevant legislative bills. Although there were previous discussions about shared governance and tenure in the legislature, these topics have subsided for now, although their resurgence in the future remains uncertain.

Additionally, the UCSFL meeting touched upon the idea of establishing a faculty advisory board for the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). Concerns were raised regarding the absence of a current faculty member on the Board of Higher Ed, although Commissioner Hartley pointed-out that the board's members possess high academic qualifications. The potential implementation of a faculty advisory board was discussed, along with the contentious issue of 90-credit degrees. Despite reservations and obstacles associated with such degrees, there is pressure for institutions to comply with this directive to avoid potential repercussions.

M. Gowans also addressed the enthusiasm among institutional governing bodies for 90-credit degrees, citing perceived benefits such as expedited graduation. However, logistical challenges and accreditation requirements pose significant hurdles. The issue extends beyond state boundaries, as some international institutions have already adopted similar programs. The concern remains that failure to conform to this trend could disadvantage Snow College compared to other institutions.

Furthermore, Commissioner Hartley inquired about tenure processes and post-tenure review procedures, collecting information in anticipation of potential legislative discussions. Questions about shared governance were also raised, prompting M. Gowans to provide documentation outlining the institution's approach to faculty accountability, suggesting it as a starting point for further dialogue on shared governance.

3. Deans Council. M. Gowans addressed a concern brought up in Deans Council concerning the protocol for handling media inquiries, particularly regarding topics like DEI. Faculty members were instructed to refer media requests for opinions to the President's office, which has prepared statements available. Administration has emphasized that faculty should avoid being perceived as spokespeople for Snow College and ensure that their comments do not inadvertently represent the institution.

M. Brenchley reminded departments and deans about upcoming proposals for new positions, highlighting the importance of expressing any staffing needs. Proposals are due by a state-mandated deadline, with instructions to chairs to submit proposals by Feb. 1. The Deans Council will review these proposals, prioritize them by late February, and present a final list to the Cabinet for decision-making.

A. Larsen expressed a desire for greater transparency in decision-making processes, particularly regarding discussions within the Deans Council. R. Keller defended the current policy, stating that updates are provided to each division after deans meetings, following a proper chain of command. A. Larsen and D. Allred voiced concerns about faculty feeling disconnected from decision-making processes and advocated for more inclusive communication.

A. Larsen further suggested that mechanisms for communication from the Deans Council to faculty need improvement, especially regarding decisions made during the late February meeting. M. Brenchley acknowledged the need for improved communication and suggested that the transition to new leadership (a new president) presents an opportunity to address these concerns.

4. College Council. M. Gowans reported on the most recent College Council meeting. First, the administration explained the compensation system, emphasizing efforts to reach 100 percent within certain financial brackets. Despite recent budget increases, concerns were raised about faculty awareness of this process. J. Rasmussen highlighted the lack of recent discussions on advancement and tenure, expressing concern about stagnant salary increases over the past two decades and the need to share data compiled by Larry Smith with the Provost. M. Gowans acknowledged Snow College's status as the lowest-paying institution in the state.

M. Gowans further raised concerns about a newly introduced policy governing policies. While recognizing the necessity for such a policy framework, he emphasized the importance of Senate involvement in policy review, particularly regarding academic freedom issues. As such, he distributed a list of policies for review, requesting feedback on which policies should be "faculty-owned" or at

least Senate-reviewed. He distinguished between policies directly related to academic freedom and those of general faculty interest.

J. Rasmussen inquired about policies for removing outdated ones, highlighting the current disorganization of policies on the college website. M. Gowans agreed to further discuss policy review and Senate-inclusive language. He also committed to seeking feedback from relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment and clarity.

Regarding the policy governing policies, J. Rasmussen recalled it being appended to another document but was unsure if it had been officially ratified due to dissatisfaction with its contents. M. Gowans concurred, recalling discussions about the need for a vote and subsequent reluctance to do so due to unresolved issues. More research will be undertaken to resolve these questions.

D. Updates from the Provost

1. Academic Integrity Policy Revisions. Provost Austin distributed a red-lined version of the Academic Integrity Policy, noting the need for minor revisions. The policy, which is currently in the catalog but not in the Curriculum Committee catalog, was recently a subject of contention in a student appeal that required legal intervention. Some changes to policy language were proposed, including clarifications regarding the burden of proof and the removal of language related to criminal law, which is not utilized in academic hearings. D. Allred sent out the document to all senators for their review.

Provost Austin expressed concerns about due process requirements, particularly regarding recording hearings and providing opportunities for students to confront their accusers. He recommended a comprehensive rewrite of the policy to ensure compliance with legal standards and to address inconsistencies with other institutional policies. M. Gowans asked whether the policy was initially a set of procedures rather than a formal policy, which D. Allred confirmed, adding that the previous document was convoluted and contradictory.

The conversation shifted to the process of revising the policy, with considerations for legal review and potential implications for faculty members' legal liability. Provost Austin emphasized the urgency of addressing immediate, stop-gap legal concerns while also acknowledging the need for a more extensive overhaul. R. Keller highlighted specific issues within the policy, including ambiguities in sanctions and the lack of clear guidelines for handling infractions, expressing a desire for clearer standards to mitigate legal risks.

After discussing the need for expedited revisions to ensure legal compliance, a subcommittee was formed to undertake a major overhaul of the policy. The group aimed to complete the revisions by the end of the semester to address legal concerns and ensure faculty protection. There was a consensus among attendees to expedite the revision process to address legal concerns and protect faculty members from potential liabilities.

Academic Standards Revision Subcommittee

R. Keller (chair), A. Christensen, and S. Cox

2. HB261 (DEI Initiatives Bill). Provost Austin informed the Senate that the bill had passed in the second reading by the Senate and would soon become law. He highlighted both positive and negative aspects of the accepted fourth version, noting that the term "DEI" had been criminalized in certain contexts. However, there were exemptions for athletic requirements, academic research, course teaching, grants, and eligibility for federal programs.

A. Larsen raised a concern regarding scholarships for theater performances and whether they would be protected under the new law. The Provost clarified that classes and syllabi were protected, but there might be challenges regarding the database requirements for syllabi compliance. He explained that prohibited practices included claims about inherently privileged identity characteristics and sociopolitical structures. He recommended distinguishing between institutional and individual faculty syllabi to protect academic freedom while complying with the law.

T. Fawcett inquired about the timeline for compliance. Provost Austin stated that the bill would take effect on July 1 and institutions would be audited starting in 2025. The Curriculum Committee would be legally required to review language, again distinguishing between institutional and faculty policies.

M. Gowans suggested removing diversity-related content from the CC website, expressing regret over the negative impact on recruiting and retention efforts. Dean M. Brenchley shared that he had reviewed numerous syllabi and didn't anticipate major problems, suggesting that inclusivity and diversity content could be easily adjusted without significant overhaul. T. Fawcett highlighted a provision in the bill requiring colleges to develop strategies for promoting viewpoint diversity, suggesting that current diversity statements in syllabi might already fulfill this requirement.

IV. Senate Initiatives

A. Academic Integrity Policy—Artificial Intelligence Integration Subcommittee

Subcommittee: J. Wallace (ex-chair), T. Fawcett (de facto chair), A. Larsen, and W. Jamison

T. Fawcett indicated that the subcommittee would be ready to propose their suggestions during the next Senate meeting.

B. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Development Subcommittee

Subcommittee: T. Fawcett (co-chair), W. Jamison (co-chair), and M. West (non-senator) with J. Rasmussen in an advisory role

T. Fawcett noted that the subcommittee has developed an outline of the document and that they are continuing to work on it.

V. Division & Committee Reports

A. Teaching & Learning Center Committee (A. Larsen). A. Larsen noted that Justin Thorpe, TLC Director, had raised concerns in their last meeting about the content housed in Canvas, which sometimes includes sensitive information such as FERPA, HIPAA, Advancement & Tenure, and Sabbatical information, highlighting potential security risks and lawsuits arising from inappropriate use of Canvas. A. Larsen suggested that the Senate should address this issue, considering that

Canvas serves multiple purposes beyond course communications and may not be secure, especially for external access.

RK clarified that Teams, not Canvas, is used for Academic Standards Committee discussions. D. Allred acknowledged the need for a policy to address privacy concerns and suggested developing clearer guidelines for copying Canvas courses to avoid intellectual property issues. A. Larsen shared a recent incident related to course copying, emphasizing the need for transparency regarding what the college owns and what permissions should be required for course copying.

J. Rasmussen proposed updating the faculty handbook, noting that the online version is outdated and inaccessible to those without access to specific Canvas courses where updates might be located. This lack of accessibility raises transparency issues regarding policies embedded within the handbook.

B. Academic Standards Committee (R. Keller). R. Keller discussed the rewriting of Academic Standards Committee policies, noting that they are being revised due to their legal implications regarding due process. Provost Austin has taken over this responsibility, and feedback opportunities will be provided before the policies are finalized.

The need for policy revision stemmed from cases with potential legal ramifications against the college involving generative artificial intelligence issues. R. Keller highlighted the disproportionate number of generative AI cases involving international students and emphasized the need for nuanced discussions to address reporting standards and inequities. She explained that the ongoing policy revision aims to provide clearer guidelines to address these challenges.

D. Allred emphasized the importance of discussing the burden of proof and suggested avoiding terms from criminal code or legal language, given the evolving nature of cheating cases. J. Rasmussen highlighted the need for clear procedures and faculty support in addressing cheating allegations. W. Jamison emphasized the significance of institutional support for faculty decisions regarding cheating allegations, suggesting that faculty need clarity on standards and assurance of institutional backing.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: A. Larsen; **2nd:** W. Jamison

Approval: unanimous of those present

The Senate adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **February 14, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes taken by Jacob L. Thomas

Minutes approved February 14, 2024