

## Meeting Minutes

March 13, 2024 @ 3:30pm

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### I. Call to Order & Welcome

The Senate was called to order at 3:32 p.m.

**Senators Present:** Matthew Gowans (Pres), Karen Carter, Alan Christensen, Trent Fawcett, Steve Hart, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Dennis Schugk, Anita Slusser, McKay West (sub: Sandra Cox), Hilary Withers

**Senators Absent:** Sandra Cox (VP)

**Guests:** Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Mike Austin (Provost)

### II. Meeting Minutes

Senators reviewed the minutes from the February 28, 2024 meeting.

**Motion to Approve:** T. Fawcett ; **2nd:** W. Jamison

**Approval:** unanimous with two abstentions from M. Gowans & A. Larsen

### III. Informational Items

#### A. Senate & Senate-Administered Elections

<b>Faculty Senate President ✓</b>	completed winner: Sandra Cox
<b>Faculty Senate Vice-President ✓</b>	completed Winner: Trent Fawcett
<b>College Council – Richfield seat</b>	nominations now open Chad Price not running for reelection
<b>GE Committee – Ephraim seat</b>	nominations now open J. Van Orman not running for reelection
<b>GE Committee – Richfield seat</b>	nominations now open Ryan Thalman ineligible for reelection
<b>Senator – Humanities</b>	division will hold elections this semester Matthew Gowans ineligible for reelection
<b>Senator – Science &amp; Math ✓</b> (by-election)	completed winner: Steve Hart
<b>Senator – Social Science</b>	division will hold elections this semester Dennis Schugk eligible for reelection

J. Thomas reminded everyone about the elections and encouraged senators to nominate faculty to stand as candidates, as the number of nominations is presently low.

#### B. Updates from the Faculty Senate President

**1. Deans Council.** M. Gowans reported that the deans discussed the progress on forming the IRB Committee. He confirmed taking the request for division members and committed to having representatives selected before the end of March. They aim to finalize the committee by the end of the month, hold an initial meeting in April, and draft a plan for the summer, with the objective of having the committee operational by the Fall.

Related to IRB matters, T. Fawcett inquired about the process for division members to get research approval. MG mentioned that the new HIR, Sam Meek, is currently on leave, and Micah Strait is temporarily filling her role, overseen by the Provost. He and Provost Austin suggested interim measures until the committee is established, with Academic Affairs agreeing to review proposals in the meantime.

M. Brenchley brought up discussions regarding legislative funding and replacement positions, including maintaining tenure lines and adding two more positions. Additionally, M. Gowans mentioned Assoc. Provost David Allred's initiative to address outdated websites and urged reporting such instances for updates to ensure compliance with laws and policies.

**2. College Council.** M. Gowans provided updates on developments discussed during the most recent College Council meeting. A lease for an apartment complex in Richfield to accommodate 60 students has been renewed, with plans for an additional 60-bed lease. This initiative aims to address the immediate need for student housing until a permanent solution is found. Additionally, a 15-year lease has been signed for the Ephraim Co-Op building. An open house will be held there to showcase Snow College's history.

From the legislative session that just concluded, M. Gowans reported that \$42 million was approved for a new Social Science Building. Senators asked questions about the timeline for construction and the impact on scheduling and office arrangements during the transition period. Despite a few temporary challenges, there was excitement about the project's prospects. Furthermore, performance funding was obtained for metrics such as completion and high-yield degrees, along with funding to waive application fees for all prospective students for one year, starting with the Class of 2025. This decision may affect application volume and yield, prompting the need for adjustments in recruitment strategies.

M. Gowans referred to a survey distributed by HR Director Brent Baxter, aimed at gauging faculty sentiments and identifying areas for improvement. Senators offered suggestions including the importance of ensuring anonymity and the need for assurance that feedback will be considered.

Senators then revisited a previous discussion about faculty input whenever a policy comes up for renewal that concerns academics or academic freedom. Senators discussed individual policies and which committees would be the best body to review them. Senators agreed on the importance of delegating policy review tasks to specialized committees to alleviate the burden on Paul Tew, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, who has been overseeing this process.

### **C. Academic Calendar for Spring 2025**

A. Larsen presented findings comparing Snow College's academic calendar with those of other institutions, highlighting that BYU is the only school in the state that follows a Monday schedule on a Tuesday after one of the spring Monday holidays. He reiterated what he had mentioned in the previous Senate meeting, that *not* doing this has led to M/W classes losing an entire week of instruction.

There was a consensus among senators that there is a lack of faculty input in decision-making regarding the academic calendar. Concerns were raised about the impact on instruction time, particularly for classes with a Monday-Wednesday schedule, and the inconsistency in scheduling from year to year, such as Spring Break and graduation being held on a Friday instead of a Saturday.

Senators offered suggestions to increase faculty involvement in the decision-making process, including inviting the Registrar to future meetings to address concerns and gather input. A. Christensen shared insights from discussions in the Business Dept., acknowledging both pros and cons of the scheduling history while emphasizing the importance of ensuring faculty input in such decisions. Overall, there was agreement among senators on the need for greater transparency and discussion regarding the academic calendar to address concerns and improve consistency and faculty involvement in decision-making. Provost Austin suggested that the Senate invite the Registrar to a future meeting, and M. Gowans agreed that he would do so.

## **IV. Senate Initiatives**

### **A. Supporting Adjunct Faculty Subcommittee**

H. Withers (chair), A. Slusser, and W. Jamison

H. Withers outlined a prioritized list of suggestions developed by this subcommittee, emphasizing the need for professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty. T. Fawcett highlighted the fact that any adjunct may qualify for \$150 in UQI funds for professional development, but noted that many adjuncts are unaware of this opportunity. A discussion ensued regarding how to effectively inform adjuncts about available resources, including the possibility of organizing professional development workshops or utilizing Canvas courses as a platform for training.

Senators suggested involving the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) in addressing adjunct faculty needs, with A. Larsen, the committee representative, agreeing to take the recommendations back to TLC for consideration. Concerns were raised about ensuring quality education and accountability among adjuncts, with H. Withers supporting the idea of recertification and peer observation to maintain standards. The issue of compensation disparity and the potential implementation of a payscale for adjuncts were also discussed, with plans to further explore these matters in collaboration with David Allred and the TLC. The Senate, led by W. Jamison, commended H. Withers for her work on the committee and agreed to reconvene to review progress on these issues in the coming weeks.

### **B. Academic Integrity Policy—Artificial Intelligence Subcommittee**

The Senate approved the following language for the use of generative AI in relation to academic integrity:

**2.4.6** The use of generative AI when it has been prohibited in an assignment or in the course at large.

Provost Austin agreed to identify the progress of this change and report back to the Senate in a future meeting.

### **C. Institutional Review Board Development Subcommittee**

Interim Chair: W. Jamison

**Initial Composition:** 5 division representatives, 1 senator, and 1 outside community member.

**Assignments:** M. Gowans, assisted by J. Thomas, has been tasked with contacting division deans to facilitate the IRB Committee's establishment. Once members have been selected, W. Jamison will work with the new committee to establish bylaws and elect a permanent chair.

Senators discussed who the outside committee member may be and considered potential candidates such as emeritus faculty or retired staff and community members. Concerns were raised about the time commitment and primary role of these external members, with the consensus being that the primary purpose of this outside perspective would be to balance academic perspectives with real-world experience.

The Senate proposed reaching out to potential members to gauge their willingness before making formal invitations. Suggestions were made to provide standard information initially, followed by invitations once potential members are aware of the expectations. W. Jamison would lead this effort and draft a brief description of the IRB and bylaws for potential candidates to review. The senate will assess potential candidates and finalize invitations during the next meeting.

### **D. Academic Standards Revision Subcommittee**

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

R. Keller presented the committee's findings regarding academic integrity practices at other institutions, noting that Snow College differs as it involves an academic standards committee in decision-making. This contrasts with procedures observed at other schools, where decisions are typically made by the Dean without committee involvement. She mentioned that there are no other institutions that include non-academic staff as part of the process. Senators discussed this, and raised concerns about the potential impact on academic freedom if Snow College were to adopt similar practices.

The conversation delved into the role of academic committees in decision-making processes. Provost Austin highlighted the typical decision-making hierarchy, where decisions are made by the Dean and can be appealed to a hearing board or the Provost. A. Christensen mentioned the presence of an academic standards office at Utah Valley University, where determinations follow a clear flowchart from the student to the instructor, then to the chair, and then to the dean, without committee involvement. Despite variations in procedures, Provost Austin noted that the majority of issues are resolved before reaching the committee stage, emphasizing the efficacy of existing processes in addressing academic concerns. The Senate acknowledged the importance of further exploring the role of academic committees in decision-making processes at Snow College, and the committee will continue its research.

## **V. Senate Training**

### **A. *Understanding Academic Freedom, Chapter 5: “Tenure”***

J. Thomas emphasized the misconception surrounding tenure, noting that the book clarifies that tenure status guarantees due process rather than unrestricted freedom. W. Jamison reiterated that the primary purpose of tenure is to safeguard academic freedom, allowing professors to teach without fear of repercussions. R. Keller highlighted the importance of functioning institutional mechanisms to uphold these assumptions.

The conversation expanded to the role of tenure in faculty retention, with A. Larsen noting its significance in fostering a sense of investment among faculty members. The detrimental effects of legislative actions abolishing tenure, as seen in Wisconsin, were discussed, with concerns raised about similar attempts in other states. The Senate acknowledged the ongoing national efforts to address tenure-related issues.

S. Hart raised concerns about the adequacy of compensation for tenured faculty, expressing disappointment with salary adjustments once tenure is granted. M. Gowans noted the stagnant nature of tenure-related salary over the past two decades and mentioned alternative compensation models used by some institutions. The discussion underscored the multifaceted implications of tenure policies on academic institutions and faculty members.

## **VI. Adjournment**

**Motion to Adjourn:** M. West; **2nd:** S. Hart

**Approval:** unanimous of all present

The Senate adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **March 27, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

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**Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas**

**Approved:** March 27, 2024