



Matthew Gowans, President
Sandra Cox, Vice-President
Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

Meeting Minutes

March 27, 2024 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Welcome

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

Senators Present: Karen Carter, Alan Christensen, Trent Fawcett, Matthew Gowans, Steve Hart, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Dennis Schugk, Anita Slusser, Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Sandra Cox (VP)

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Michael Austin (Provost), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Tony Smith (Senator-Elect)

II. Meeting Minutes

Review of minutes from the March 13 meeting.

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

Approval: unanimous of all senators present.

III. Informational Items

A. Senate & Senate-Administered Elections

Faculty Senate President ✓	completed winner: Sandra Cox
Faculty Senate Vice-President ✓	completed Winner: Trent Fawcett
College Council – Richfield seat ✓	completed Winner: Brent Reese
GE Committee – Ephraim seat ✓	completed Winner: McKay West
GE Committee – Richfield seat ✓	completed Winner: Ana Wilson
Senator – Humanities ✓	completed Winner: Tony Smith
Senator – Science & Math ✓ (by-election)	completed winner: Steve Hart
Senator – Social Science ✓	completed Dennis Schugk reelected for 2nd term

B. Updates from the Faculty Senate President

1. Deans Council & College Council Updates

a. Prison Education Program. M. Gowans reported on recent discussions in Deans Council concerning various initiatives. He noted the prison education program. Provost Austin will be teaching English classes there during the summer, and there is a need for a math instructor. Senators expressed a desire for increased participation and volunteers to support these efforts.

b. Tech Ed Updates. Related to technical education, such classes are being considered as part of stackable credentials for students transferring from other institutions to earn college credit. There will be upcoming meetings with tech ed schools. Snow College is poised to meet their needs as a transfer institution, accepting tech credits towards associate's degrees. This presents a significant opportunity for Snow College, which has remained open-minded and receptive to these proposals. Many tech ed students are now pursuing Associate of Science (A.S.) degrees rather than Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degrees, as the former provides greater transferability to four-year programs. The shift reflects changing preferences and aspirations among tech ed students.

Senators touched on logistical questions of these classes, with considerations for online delivery of courses to accommodate students from various locations. While some courses will be offered on-campus in Richfield, there is a need for online options to cater to students from Tooele, St. George, Cache Valley, and other tech schools. The focus will be on ensuring that a sufficient number of General Education (GE) courses are available online to meet the needs of transfer students, many of whom will bring non-GE credits from certificate programs.

c. Changes to Tenure Review Process. Senators reviewed the implications of [HB438: "Higher Education Revisions,"](#) a recently approved state law that significantly increases the college president's decision-making powers regarding tenure. The bill, signed by the governor on March 12, also mandates a review of post-tenure faculty every five years, a more lenient frequency compared to Snow's current three-year cycle. Despite this, the plan is to continue with an annual review similar to a Dean's review, followed by the comprehensive five-year review including a Faculty Evaluation Team (FET).

Senators discussed whether these reviews should fall under the purview of Senate committees or be handled by the Deans. The discussion revealed a preference for streamlining the process to reduce the workload, considering the considerable impact on all faculty. It was noted that the law requires substantial reviews, encompassing teaching assessments, research, service, and intellectual property, equivalent to the current FET process for

tenure-track faculty. Questions were raised about the bill's specificity regarding the outcomes of reviews, particularly in cases of deficiency.

A key concern was maintaining the integrity of tenure by preventing the review process from undermining it. Suggestions included tweaking the Advancement and Tenure (A&T) policy to allow appeals to the Senate on academic freedom grounds and potentially involving the Provost in cases where issues arise during the Dean's review.

The consensus was that while streamlining the process to minimize bureaucracy, the Senate should be involved in the appeals process, particularly in safeguarding academic freedom. The Deans are expected to manage the reviews, with the Senate playing a role in appeals, ensuring a balance between administrative efficiency and faculty rights.

2. Academic Calendar for Spring 2025. Amy Noblett, Executive Assistant in the Academic Affairs Office, has been a key figure in the academic calendar planning process for years. She shared with M. Gowans the email communications regarding the previous year's calendar formation and provided insights from the Deans Council meeting on September 18, 2023. A calendar committee was established in 2023, comprising David Allred (then Acting Provost), Lindsay Chaney (then Asst. Provost), Kevin Sorenson (Deans), and other staff leadership. Current Provost Mike Austin is anticipated to chair future calendar planning. The Deans received a proposed calendar via email and were responsible for gathering feedback, which was notably accomplished in the one division due to a committee member's significant contribution, but this process was not followed in all divisions.

A. Larsen raised concerns about the committee's composition, pointing out the predominance of staff members over faculty, especially when changes could lead to courses missing a full week of instruction. M. Gowans explained the intention behind involving Deans in the feedback process, which ideally flows from the Deans to the Deans Council and then to the Provost, though there seem to have been communication gaps.

W. Jamison suggested involving the Registrar in future discussions, noting that decisions made last year affect the next five years. S. Hart emphasized the difficulty in achieving consensus among campus members, while R. Keller

highlighted a previous comprehensive survey that sought wide-ranging input but resulted in no clear agreement.

M. Gowans acknowledged the need for greater faculty representation in the process. However, the calendaring committee did achieve a balance between the Fall and Spring semesters for 2024-2025, each semester now having 70 days of instruction. The possibility of adjusting future calendars and incorporating more faculty input was discussed; M. Gowans will consider inviting Alex Snyder, Registrar, for future Senate discussions. A. Slusser noted the adjustment of Spring Break and the addition of a three-day weekend, illustrating ongoing efforts to refine the academic calendar.

3. Committee Reports

a. Science & Mathematics Division. S. Hart shared concerns from faculty within his division regarding the budget process, particularly the trend towards centralization. Some faculty are worried that centralizing travel funds could lead to a loss of control over departmental or divisional budgets, potentially resulting in non-academic entities consuming a disproportionate share of travel funds. This concern is part of broader apprehensions about how budget decisions might affect faculty autonomy and resources.

M. Gowans connected these concerns to broader issues, such as the loss of rollover funds, indicating a shift in how budgetary decisions are impacting faculty and academic departments more significantly. The discussion revealed that there was no formal policy change prompting these concerns, rather a change in approach to budget management that was communicated to the Senate. Some senators felt that information was given more in a way of explanation rather than being provided an opportunity to discuss the outcome.

Dean M. Brenchley confirmed the existence of widespread worry about the budget process among faculty, suggesting that the decision-making process lacked transparency and meaningful consultation. W. Jamison echoed this sentiment, describing the communication about budget changes as one-sided and brought to the Senate's attention without an open discussion or consideration of feedback, further emphasizing the sense of imposition felt by faculty regarding the new budgetary approach.

b. General Education (GE) Committee. T. Fawcett reported that the GE Committee has been assessing Snow's approach to the state mandate to reduce credit requirements. They have gathered information from both faculty and students to help inform the process. This effort aims to align with the state's mandate that required GE credits not exceed 30. Despite striving for a consensus, opinions among faculty are divided. A preliminary agreement is emerging around eliminating the Integrated Education (IE) requirement, which would still leave the institution one credit over the state limit. (The IE requirement involves taking an additional GE class in any area to meet credit requirements.)

One consideration being deliberated is whether to remove science labs from GE requirements (thought not from science majors). However, there is concern that students may not take these labs as electives if they are not mandated, potentially impacting both course offerings and student preparation for higher-division coursework.

Another option: eliminating the Foundations requirement. This suggestion is controversial, as Foundations aims to integrate different fields of study, but inconsistencies in workload and student engagement have prompted criticism of the program. Some faculty believe that simplifying GE requirements to the minimum allowed would enhance Snow's ability to attract students.

Regarding the timeline for decision-making, it was noted that changes need to be implemented by Fall 2025. This leaves the committee with approximately a year to finalize their recommendations, with course scheduling for the 2025 academic year needing confirmation by January.

Innovative solutions such as reducing Foundations to a two-credit hour class while retaining labs have been discussed but have also met with skepticism over potential compromises to the program's objectives. Concerns were also raised about the workload implications of such changes. The unique position of Snow in offering both a GE science lab and the Foundations program was highlighted. While some see the distinctiveness of Foundations as a reason to maintain it, the necessity of the science lab is defended based on the preparation it provides students, regardless of their major.

The discussion concluded with the acknowledgment that any decision is likely to leave some factions within the divisions dissatisfied, underscoring the challenge of balancing diverse perspectives. The conversation, marked by fatigue and complexity, underscores the ongoing debate and the need for further discussion to achieve a balanced and strategic approach to GE credit reduction.

c. *The Testing Center.* M. Gowans noted the new installation of cameras in the testing center, which recently captured footage of a student cheating. This prompted a discussion on the necessity of establishing a clear policy regarding the use of such footage, particularly about academic integrity violations. M. Gowans suggested that the policy might be incorporated into existing IT policies and mentioned plans to consult with Paul Tew for guidance. Additionally, M. Gowans tasked R. Keller with engaging the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) on this matter.

R. Keller shared a related experience from teaching online courses, where a student suspected of using artificial intelligence (AI) for cheating was monitored through Respondus, a tool that includes camera surveillance during exams from the students' computers. T. Smith posed the question of whether recording students in such contexts might conflict with FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations, highlighting the importance of a formal policy to guide the handling of surveillance footage.

D. Schugk noted that recordings are already a standard practice for Concurrent Enrollment and Interactive Video Conferencing (IVC) classes, suggesting that precedents for managing recorded academic activities exist, though not specifically for surveillance footage capturing misconduct.

The discussion also touched upon the request for more cameras in the testing center. However, M. Gowans and Provost Austin acknowledged that expanding surveillance capabilities would require additional funding, implying financial constraints on such measures.

IV. Senate Initiatives

A. Supporting Adjunct Faculty Subcommittee

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

H. Withers discussed initiatives to improve adjunct faculty support during a recent meeting. The subcommittee consulted with Assoc. Provost David Allred, who agreed to create a chart categorizing proposed initiatives by the time required for implementation: immediate, medium-term, and long-term.

One of the long-term goals identified was adjusting the adjunct pay scale, anticipated to be a 3-5-year project due to budgetary constraints. Despite widespread support for this change, the committee recognized the need to manage expectations regarding the timeline.

In the short term, the committee plans to enhance communication with adjunct faculty about existing resources, such as the availability of University Quality Improvement (UQI) funds and Deans' travel funds, ensuring that this information is distributed promptly.

The creation of an adjunct handbook was discussed as a way to centralize information on resources available to adjunct faculty. This initiative could be undertaken by the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC), possibly as a physical handbook or a Canvas page.

Concerns were raised about the workload implications of proposed recertification processes for adjunct faculty, considering their already limited compensation. The meeting also touched on the potential for a revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for adjuncts, which could formalize several support measures without establishing new policies, a preference previously expressed by administration.

The necessity of incentivizing adjunct participation in these initiatives was highlighted, with compensation seen as a potential incentive. The committee also suggested recognizing the long-term service of adjuncts, similar to how full-time professors are celebrated, and the idea of introducing an annual award for outstanding adjunct faculty, noting that other universities have already adopted such recognitions.

B. Academic Integrity Policy—Artificial Intelligence Subcommittee

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

R. Keller reported that the subcommittee identified five key areas for reform to align the college academic integrity processes more closely with practices at other institutions. These areas include:

- 1. Removal of Infraction Levels:** The concept of infraction levels is not consistently applied at Snow and is uncommon at other institutions.
- 2. Revising the Process Order:** Adjusting the current process to a more standard sequence where issues go from instructor-student discussions to possible appeals up through administrative channels—Dept. Chair, then Dean, then Provost—reflecting common practices elsewhere.
- 3. Implementing Flowcharts:** Creating flowcharts in published policies to clarify the process for handling academic infractions.
- 4. Clarifying Sanction Options:** Providing clear options for sanctions that instructors may apply, to ensure consistency and fairness.
- 5. Revising Committee Composition:** Proposing an academic representative from each division and including the Registrar as a voting member. No other staff members included: having significant staff representation is not implemented at other institutions.

The committee discussed the need for a policy that specifies the handling of serious infractions, such as system infiltration, which would be directly referred to the Academic Standards Committee (ASC). Other recommendations include ensuring that academic integrity policies are detailed in course syllabi and considering *sanction levels* rather than infraction levels, with a framework for handling appeals and recommendations potentially leading to a provost review.

The committee plans to consult with Provost Austin to discuss implementing these changes and possibly addressing them at the Cabinet level or with Student Affairs. This approach aims to resolve a significant portion of current issues by allowing instructors to manage most cases directly, with the ASC stepping in for appeals or serious infractions. The proposal seeks to make the process more transparent and manageable for both faculty and students, with a

tracking system for reported infractions that does not automatically trigger a decision process unless an appeal is filed.

The consensus among Senate members supports moving forward with these recommendations, emphasizing a collaborative approach to redefine the terms and processes related to academic integrity violations.

C. Institutional Review Board Development Subcommittee

Interim Chair: W. Jamison

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

Senators discussed the recruitment of potential outside community members for this new committee. Cless and Sue Young expressed sincere interest in joining, appreciating the idea of mutual support where one could cover for the other if necessary. Paul Gardner also showed keen interest. The Senate decided to send letters outlining expected duties to these candidates and others who showed interest, postponing the vote until invitations had been extended to expedite the process. Members agreed to be prepared to vote at the next meeting, with a suggestion to include short CVs or descriptions to aid in decision-making. Concerns were raised about potential members needing more information before committing, leading to a consensus that personal introductions or brief descriptions from the person who contacted them could substitute for formal résumés, facilitating a more informed and swift selection process.

V. Adjournment

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

Approval: unanimous of all senators present.

The Senate adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **April 10, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas

Approved: April 10, 2024