

Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2026 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Review of Minutes

A. Assembly & Attendance

The Senate meeting began at 3:30 pm.

Senators Present: Trent Fawcett (Pres), Adam Larsen (VP), Jared Breakall, Madi Chadwick, Josh Hales, Heather Holland, Jess Jones (sub: K. Wilkinson), Rachel Keller, Kade Parry, David Rodriguez

Absent: K. Wilkinson (sub: J. Jones), J. Moosman, L. Lee, J. West

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Mike Brenchley (Deans), English Brooks (Faculty), Tyler Herzl (SBO), Robert Holt (Director of Advising), Maren Hyer (Faculty), Erin Seaward (Faculty), Greg Wright (Faculty)

B. Review of Minutes

MOTION to approve the minutes: H. Holland. **2nd:** J. Hales. **Motion carried** unanimously with one abstention (K. Parry).

C. Meeting Recordings

The Senate also revisited access to meeting recordings. The recordings are not distributed widely, and participants recalled previous discussions about a process for requesting access through Senate leadership and retaining recordings for a specified period. Parliamentarian Thomas reminded the Senate that it has not yet formally adopted a resolution establishing such procedures. President Fawcett recommended returning to the matter soon for formal action.

II. Senate Membership

A. Fall 2026 Elections

1. Space Planning Committee

Five candidates have been nominated for the at-large seat. Parliamentarian Thomas asked whether the Senate preferred ranked-choice voting or a first-past-the-post election. Discussion addressed the possibility that, with five candidates, a first-past-the-post election could produce a winner supported by only a small plurality. Ranked-choice voting would allow voters to indicate their preferences in a single ballot and reduce the need for subsequent runoff elections and additional emails.

MOTION by H. Holland to use ranked-choice voting for the Space Planning Committee Election. **2nd:** J. Breakall. **Motion carried** unanimously. The election is expected to open the following Monday and remain open for the week.

III. Administrative Updates

A. Faculty Senate President

1. A&T Dashboard

President Fawcett reported that he was working with software engineering students to develop a centralized Advancement and Tenure (A&T) dashboard within mySnow to organize faculty dossiers and help chairs, deans, Faculty Evaluation Teams (FETs), and the A&T Committee manage reviews. The students had selected the compensated senior project from several options, and President Fawcett was meeting regularly with them. He circulated an early interface draft, and hoped to present the project to the A&T Committee within one to two months. The dashboard would not itself change A&T policy—implementation and any requirement to use it would depend on the committee's review and approval.

In response to questions from Senators Breakall, Holland, and Rodriguez, President Fawcett explained that the dashboard would standardize submissions while accommodating different file formats, supplementary materials, and uploaded course evaluations, which would remain housed in their existing system. Role-based access would allow chairs to track evaluations, deans to assign FET members and leads, and reviewers to approve date-stamped letters electronically or submit alternatives. Candidates would initially control their dossiers before submitting them for review; chairs could add required evaluation materials that

candidates could view but not block. President Fawcett emphasized the project's potential to reduce administrative burdens and improve the organization of faculty reviews.

2. AI in the Classroom Taskforce

President Fawcett reported on discussions with Provost Austin about transferring the AI in the Classroom Taskforce to Senate oversight, initially with the existing membership retained for one calendar year to maintain continuity. Following a subsequent conversation, he did not expect the transfer to proceed because agreement had not been reached on Senate authority to define the committee's mission and select representatives democratically. He emphasized that the Senate's authority rests on the consent of the faculty it represents. Provost Austin had nevertheless offered the Senate a representative on the existing taskforce, and President Fawcett clarified, in response to Senator Keller, that the Senate remained free to establish its own AI committee. He also offered his understanding that Academic Affairs believed additional work was needed to fulfill the Board of Trustees' initiative that prompted the taskforce, expressly noting that this was his interpretation rather than a direct statement from the Provost.

3. Meetings with College Leadership

President Fawcett reported that he and Senator Larsen would meet with College President McIlff in approximately two weeks, followed by their regular monthly meeting with Provost Austin the following week. He encouraged senators to bring forward unresolved faculty concerns, particularly those involving academic freedom, curriculum, and disciplinary matters, so Senate leadership could raise them in those meetings.

B. Student Body Representative

1. Faculty Involvement in Departmental Clubs

Tyler Herzl requested faculty support for departmental clubs, emphasizing their academic component and the importance of communication among faculty advisers, club presidencies, and assigned student body officers. Officers were willing to assist but needed information about club needs and specific tasks. Clubs receive \$50 upon registration and may receive another \$50 each month when a presidency member attends leadership training, held on the first Monday of each month at 5:30 pm in the SBO office. Additional funding is subject to restrictions, with off-campus activities generally ineligible. President Fawcett encouraged senators to share the request with their schools and departments.

C. Office of Academic Affairs

No Academic Affairs report was presented. President Fawcett acknowledged discussions about having administrators absent to facilitate candid faculty conversation, noting that participants had expressed differing views about that approach. He also reported that Academic Affairs administrators were attending a scholarship benefit dinner in Richfield. He thanked them for their ongoing support.

D. Deans Council

1. Compensation and Legislative Support

Dean Branchley reported that President McIlff had reiterated her efforts to obtain support for compensation increases, including continued legislative advocacy. Senator Parry asked whether proposed advancement increases remained under consideration after being delayed pending a compensation study. Dean Branchley understood them to be part of the broader compensation discussion, but no definitive update was available. President Fawcett agreed to seek clarification and raise the issue with the Faculty Association President. Senators also discussed how changes might affect faculty who had already advanced. Senator Hales requested clearer information, and Senator Larsen emphasized the need to address salary compression.

2. Course Scheduling and Efficiency

Dean Branchley reported continued attention to low-enrollment courses, redundant sections, and efficient use of instructional resources. He encouraged faculty to discuss course offerings with chairs and deans, citing two online sections of the same course with enrollments of 15 and 18 as an example of sections that could be combined. He also acknowledged that some low-enrollment courses are necessary for disciplinary or program requirements. Decisions should consider student needs, faculty responsibilities, and appropriate use of resources.

3. Additional Degree Programs

Dean Branchley and President Fawcett clarified that discussions about additional three- or four-year degrees did not indicate an imminent conversion of Snow College into a four-year university. Any additional degrees would need to align with the college's mission and six-county service region, and expansion would be selective rather than comprehensive. Dean Branchley encouraged senators to correct speculation about broad or immediate changes to the college's degree offerings.

4. Compensation for the Adjunct Senator

The Senate discussed outstanding compensation for Senator Lee's service as the adjunct faculty representative. President Fawcett reported that Amy Noblett, Academic Affairs Executive Assistant, was investigating the matter with Human Resources and that Provost Austin had assured him payment would proceed. The established rate was \$1,000 annually; Senator Lee had begun serving in January, and payment would be processed during the current semester for completion of the year. President Fawcett agreed to follow up.

IV. Senate Business

A. AI Policy & Faculty Governance

1. Purpose of the Discussion

Senator Larsen acknowledged that recent campus exchanges about AI had sometimes been heated and hurtful, describing the meeting as an opportunity for constructive, continuing dialogue. Because the technology and its educational implications are changing, any policy or committee process would need to remain responsive to new information. President Fawcett emphasized participants' shared concern for students, encouraged professional discussion, and framed the Senate's responsibility around protecting academic freedom and faculty ownership of curriculum.

2. Research and Opportunities for Faculty Input

Prof. Greg Wright (Humanities) explained that, after attending an ethics conference in Amsterdam, he had read two MIT studies that raised concerns about potential harm to students. He contacted college leadership to request discussion of the research at a faculty gathering. Wright clarified that he had not proposed prohibiting AI: he wants a fuller conversation and greater opportunities for faculty input, a request he believed other faculty shared.

3. Faculty Resources, Environmental Concerns, and Copyright

Prof. Maren Hyer (Humanities) expressed concern that the AI faculty resources available in Canvas presented some contrary research primarily to rebut it rather than examine it fully. Recalling Prof. Liberty Peterson's (Social Science) request for attention to environmental impacts, she urged the college to apply the research standards expected of students, including consideration of multiple perspectives and avoidance of confirmation bias and straw-man arguments. Hyer acknowledged useful applications of generative AI while emphasizing research raising concerns about learning and skill development. She also raised

environmental burdens on rural and lower-income communities, students' conscientious objections, inequities associated with paid access, and the influence of commercial interests on adoption.

Drawing on her work with an international journal and publishers, Hyer described emerging disclosure requirements and publication complications associated with submitting work to open AI systems. She recalled a library email about AI, copyright, and licensed databases and requested greater attention to students uploading published articles to AI tools. Hyer supported a central faculty role in collecting, evaluating, and sharing research on benefits and risks, suggesting that a Senate committee could provide sustained attention to these questions.

4. Student Perspectives

Tyler Herzl described himself as generally opposed to AI use while acknowledging that students hold varied views and may fear career disadvantages if they do not learn to use it. He offered to include neutral AI questions in an upcoming survey or focus group involving students from different majors and report the findings to the Senate. President Fawcett welcomed the proposal, and faculty were invited to help develop questions. Explaining his concerns, Herzl described students copying quiz questions into AI without reading them and worried that dependence on generated answers undermined learning and durable skills. He also raised concerns about data centers' effects on rural communities.

5. Faculty Representation, Committee Structure, and Workload

Senator Breakall identified two distinct questions: how to help faculty think critically about classroom AI use and how to ensure faculty representation in future policy decisions. President Fawcett suggested broadening the Library Committee's responsibilities as one possible approach, noting its research role and the burdens of staffing additional taskforces. Senator Holland identified interlibrary loan as an avenue for obtaining research, and Prof. Jess Jones suggested that strong interest in AI might make a committee easier to staff. Senator Holland also asked about funding or course release for sustained research. Senator Larsen agreed that substantial work would require dedicated time.

Prof. English Brooks suggested considering existing committees, including the Curriculum Committee, and expressed concern about institutional language appearing to shift from faculty "may" use AI to "should" or "must" use it. Such messaging could conflict with academic freedom and particularly affect untenured faculty. Prof. Brooks emphasized that departments and disciplines should determine appropriate practices according to learning outcomes and student needs. Senator Larsen agreed that the Curriculum Committee and library could contribute, whether or not another taskforce was created.

6. Academic Freedom and Support for Faculty Who Decline AI Use

Senator Keller reported receiving assurances that declining to incorporate AI was within her academic freedom, although campus presentations and messaging had left her feeling pressured to adopt it. She requested comparable pedagogical support for faculty who restrict AI, including assistance with instructional design, students' potential use, and achieving learning outcomes. She also explained that her position reflected theological convictions about thinking as a holy act and teaching as stewardship. Senator Holland noted that students might hold similar convictions, and Prof. Brooks emphasized that addressing AI's implications does not require implementing it in courses.

Prof. Hyer similarly described feeling pressured and questioned whether institutional resources and messaging adequately represented research, publishing concerns, and student perspectives critical of AI. She called for a fuller conversation in which those concerns receive substantive attention.

7. Responsible Use and Mitigation of Harm

Senator Holland acknowledged the importance of preparing students for changing technologies while emphasizing faculty responsibility to mitigate harm. She wanted discussion of risks, market forces, and technological developments alongside demonstrations of useful applications. Prof. Wright agreed and supported a committee that would continually examine research and educational uses. He also recommended revisiting the AI policy as the technology changes, noting that annual review might not fully accommodate the pace of development.

8. Academic Integrity and Learning Outcomes

Prof. Wright discussed *The Opposite of Cheating: Teaching for Integrity in the Age of AI*, emphasizing a culture in which students understand the value of learning and have reasons to act with integrity. He urged faculty transparency about their own AI use and clear explanations of why it is required, permitted, or prohibited. Citing the policy's rationale and commentary on acknowledging AI assistance, he argued that faculty should model the practices expected of students. Decisions should be grounded in research, disciplinary needs, learning outcomes, and students' best interests, with investment in instructional work beyond AI adoption.

Senator Parry questioned how AI-assisted cheating affects assessment of student and program outcomes. He compared bypassing an intellectual exercise with using a forklift in a weightlifting class: completing the task does not accomplish the intended development. He reported Faculty Association support for a committee with faculty buy-in. Senator Larsen

emphasized democratic selection as essential to that support, while Senator Parry also stressed the need for timely action.

9. Perspectives Supporting AI Use

President Fawcett emphasized the need to represent faculty who believe AI has improved their teaching and connections with students. Senator Rodriguez described AI as a tool with benefits and drawbacks. In his course on integrating technology into education, students use AI and evaluate its performance, with a comparable alternative assignment available to those who object. Although generally favorable toward AI, he emphasized listening to concerns and helping students develop the skills and judgment to use the technology effectively.

10. Options for Further Senate Action

President Fawcett outlined the Senate's options moving forward: establish an AI taskforce, broaden a currently existing committee's responsibilities, or establish a taskforce to examine the need for a separate committee and recommend a path forward. Senator Parry suggested consulting faculty before deciding, and senators were encouraged to take the options to their schools and divisions. Parliamentarian Thomas agreed to circulate them. No motion was adopted to establish an AI committee or taskforce; the matter would return after faculty consultation.

President Fawcett reiterated faculty discretion to permit or prohibit AI in individual courses and assignments and encouraged departmental collaboration. He cautioned against interpreting state and USHE expectations as requiring AI in every course, from every instructor, or in every program. Senator Larsen noted the challenge of preserving academic freedom while maintaining shared outcomes in courses with many sections.

B. Other Initiatives

1. Faculty Handbook Update

President Fawcett reported that Provost Austin supported updating the Faculty Handbook, although a backlog of website requests complicated progress. An Institutional Review Board request submitted in February remained unresolved, and President Fawcett no longer had his previous access for edits. He described moving faculty guidance toward a live online format linking to current policies rather than reproducing potentially outdated text in a static PDF. He thanked Senator Wilkinson for her work and invited interested faculty to contribute. The A&T dashboard and AI priorities had been addressed earlier; no additional substantive discussion was recorded under the remaining initiative headings.

V. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by R. Keller. **2nd:** H. Holland. **Motion carried** unanimously. The Senate meeting concluded at 5:03 pm.

The next Senate meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 14 @ 3:30 pm.**

Meeting minutes by Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

Approved by the Faculty Senate, October 14, 2026

AI Disclosure Statement. *The Parliamentarian personally took the original meeting notes and used ChatGPT to assist with organizing, condensing, and clarifying those notes for the written minutes. The Parliamentarian subsequently reviewed and revised the completed minutes for accuracy and remains responsible for their content. The AI service was configured so that the material provided in this process is not used to train AI models.*