

Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2023

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Senate was called to order at 3:33 p.m.

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

Senators Absent: Karen Carter, Trent Fawcett (sub: Keith Steurer), Jeff Wallace (sub: Anita Slusser)

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), David Allred (Associate Provost), Mike Brenchley (Deans)

II. Minutes from Previous Meeting

A. Review of minutes from October 11, 2023

Motion to Approve: A. Larsen; **2nd:** J. Rasmussen

Approval: unanimous of all senators present

B. Review of minutes from October 25, 2023

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

Approval: unanimous of all senators present

C. Next Senate Meeting. Because the next two regularly scheduled Senate meetings conflict with Thanksgiving Break and Finals Week, senators agreed that the final meeting of the semester will be held on **Wednesday, November 29**. The proposal by M. Gowans was approved by all senators present.

III. Informational Items & General Questions

A. Updates from the Faculty Senate President

1. Meeting with Pres. McIff. M. Gowans met with both Pres. McIff and Faculty Association President Heidi Johnson to discuss recent developments. Pres. McIff mentioned the funding priorities the administration will present to the state legislature in January, which includes the development of a rural scholarship fund. Another point of discussion was the persistent disconnect between the two campuses, with Richfield feeling particularly isolated compared to Ephraim. Many communications are tailored to Ephraim, so Pres. McIff and others want to proactively engage with Richfield. M. Gowans requested that senators contact Richfield faculty members in their divisions, inquire on behalf of the Senate about their concerns, and explore how the Senate can assist, conveying Senate support and willingness to help.

2. Educated Persons Conference

(a) Conference Attendance. M. Gowans, S. Cox, and W. Jamison attended the recent Educated Persons Conference involving colleges and universities from across the state. M. Gowans noted that the conference's focus was on the R470 revision for General Education (GE). A. Larsen inquired about when the outcomes from the conference would be finalized, to which W. Jamison responded that they would likely be ready in the spring, possibly around March.

(b) Standardized Passing Grades Across Institutions. Groups at the conference addressed questions about standardizing passing grades for GE classes across institutions, suggesting a uniform "D-" as a passing grade. For transfer students, the receiving schools would need to accept the sending schools' passing grades and credits for student transfers as stipulated.

W. Jamison raised the question of whether the passing grade for General Education should be a "C-" or a "D-." There seemed to be a difference in opinions among institutions, with some advocating for a "D-" as a passing grade. A. Slusser pointed out that the passing grade should be consistent among institutions, as it affects prerequisites for majors. The "D-" grade might work for GE credits but not for major programs.

J. Rasmussen questioned how this might impact DFWI (D-grade, Failure, Withdrawal, Incomplete) rates and reporting, as an “F” might encompass anything below a C-. M. Gowans did not have information on this matter. A. Slusser proposed considering percentages rather than just a letter grade to define what a "D-" means, as different institutions might have varying thresholds for what constitutes a "D-."

(c) UCSFL Discussions. M. Gowans shared insights from a meeting with other faculty senate leaders, one of which was the need for more faculty representation on the board of higher education (currently, only one Board of Higher Ed member has experience in academia). They also discussed potential bills in the Utah legislature, such as possible restrictions on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts on campuses. The consensus was that faculty should be part of the legislative process to influence decisions positively.

(d) DEI Programs. W. Jamison expressed concerns about the anti-DEI bill. R. Keller expressed further concerns for Snow College staff who have dedicated their careers to these efforts and how such a bill could impact them. M. Gowans emphasized the need to protect those affected, regardless of the bill's outcome, emphasizing the importance of unity within the Faculty Senate.

D. Allred mentioned that the bill that *had* been passed earlier this year on the matter required colleges to submit reports for a future review. M. Gowans noted that he had written an “amicus curiae” letter to the legislature over the summer, but due to the constraints of the timing was not able to receive a quorum of support from senators and did not send it. He suggested reviving this letter, and offered to share it for further discussion and review.

3. College Council Representation

(a) Senate Bylaws 4.4 Text: “College Council Representative Selection: The College Council has tasked the Faculty Senate with selecting five voting members of the College Council. The Senate ensures that the College Council has faculty representation from both campuses. The Faculty Senate President and the Faculty Association President shall serve as voting members of the College Council. The Faculty Senate shall define the process and select three

at-large College Council voting members from full-time Snow College faculty members on a rotating three-year schedule.”

(b) Parliamentarian’s Note: The above bylaws were designed to be flexible. Currently, the three at-large faculty include two from Richfield and one from Ephraim. If a Dean replaces one of these seats, then the bylaws will need to be amended, including with language specifying that one of the remaining at-large seats shall be from Ephraim and the other from Richfield.

(c) Discussion. M. Gowans noted that the College Council going forward would be composed as usual of five faculty members; however, the number of at-large seats would need to be reduced by one in order to accommodate the presence of a Dean also representing the faculty. As such, he suggested changes to the language in section 4.4. The proposed structure would include a Senate representative, a Faculty Association representative, and a Dean. Regarding the two at-large positions, senators considered implementing a two-year rotating basis (instead of three years), with one representative from Richfield and one from Ephraim.

S. Cox raised a question about the benefits of having two-year terms instead of three. M. Gowans clarified that the advantage of a two-year term is mainly to ensure regular elections and encourage more faculty to get involved.

W. Jamison expressed support for the two-year term and sought clarification on who the Senate representative would be, inquiring if it meant the Senate President. M. Gowans explained that this role is currently filled by the Senate President, but it could be adjusted as needed. The choice might depend on who can attend certain meetings. For example, if the Senate President is unavailable, the Vice-President could step in. The key is to ensure senate representation regardless of who attends.

M. Gowans also mentioned a desire to have a representative from the Professional Track, and a Dean could fulfill that role if no suitable candidate is available.

The **motion** to implement a two-year rotation was proposed by W. Jamison and seconded by A. Larsen, and it received unanimous approval from all senators present.

M. Gowans confirmed that he would work on changing the language in the document with J. Thomas; Pres. McIff had requested that the new College Council be in place by the beginning of spring semester. M. Gowans said that he would also contact the two sitting Richfield representatives to discuss their involvement, as one of those positions needs to be eliminated.

B. Updates from Deans Council

(a) Stipends & Overload. J. Rasmussen reported on two recent Deans Council meetings, primarily focused on the R470 policy, faculty stipends, and overloads. There was a discussion about designating such funds as "stipends" instead of "overload" to streamline budget tracking. He also mentioned concerns about how these changes might affect the Advancement & Tenure Committee, as well as a proposal to limit the number of stipends faculty can receive simultaneously: possibly no more than 33% of their base salary. W. Jamison emphasized the importance of words and the term "overload," and wanted to gather more information before forming an opinion. J. Rasmussen assured that there would be more discussion on the implementation of these changes.

J. Rasmussen also addressed the allocation of stipend money, highlighting the need for clarity and proper handling of funds. He shared a figure presented by D. Allred, which indicated that stipends awarded amounted to \$215,000. This had in the past few years been covered by federal money for the Covid-19 pandemic, but this fund has since been depleted.

M. Gowans pointed out that some faculty prefer a release rather than a stipend, as money doesn't provide more time. He suggested that faculty who are stretched thin might require additional staff to manage their workload.

W. Jamison mentioned the need to stay competitive in terms of faculty pay, considering Snow's position relative to other institutions. R. Keller questioned whether Snow's pay is competitive with other two-year schools and stated that she felt well-compensated for her work. She also emphasized the need to

compare Snow with other two-year schools, not salaries at R1 institutions. M. Brenchley clarified that the goal is to reach 95% of the median salary for colleges of similar size and funding. K. Steurer highlighted the issue of salary competitiveness in certain programs, particularly in engineering, and mentioned the need to reevaluate salary numbers.

A. Christensen shared concerns about the variations in workloads and responsibilities across different departments and divisions. J. Rasmussen explained the credit load requirements for different types of institutions and the complexity of managing workload in various departments. M. Gowans acknowledged that the issue would likely arise again in the Senate.

(b) Humanities Division Webpage. M. Brenchley noted that the Deans praised the Humanities Division for its updated web pages, and expressed the desire for more departments and divisions to do likewise. R. Keller commended the efforts of Sheryl Bodrero, Dean of Humanities, and Kellyanne Ure, English & Philosophy Department Chair, in improving page design and implementing regular updates.

(c) Selection of Deans & Chairs. J. Rasmussen discussed changes to language in the procedure document related to the selection of associate deans and department chairs. D. Allred explained the major changes, including the use of “Provost” instead of Vice-President of Academic Affairs and the clarification of these roles being able to serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. The document would be posted for clarity and for all faculty to see. He further explained that commentary on the document would be welcomed, but emphasized that as this document defines a procedure, not a policy, the changes are not subject to a vote.

J. Rasmussen pointed out the importance of understanding who is responsible for dismissing chairs or deans and emphasized the reality of hierarchy within academic institutions. M. Brenchley mentioned that changes were made to require deans to gather feedback from department or division members.

M. Gowans inquired why there is often a committee formed when selecting deans but not for selecting chairs. A. Christensen answered that the absence of consistency in department size is a challenge, and a department of five might constitute such a committee. J. Rasmussen pointed out that the lack of a

committee for selecting chairs from the division had not been discussed in Deans Council.

M. Gowans expressed his belief in the need for more trust in academic leadership but acknowledged that the naturally inquiring nature of academic fields does sometimes create suspicion. M. Brenchley reemphasized the changes in the procedure to make feedback from department or division members mandatory.

A. Larsen emphasized the need for standardization in chair and dean selection processes to avoid biases and inconsistencies. R. Keller supported the idea of standardization to build trust through integrity and consistency. It was a lack of consistency, she noted, that often leads faculty to believe their voices are not being heard.

W. Jamison raised the issue of faculty's role in these processes, and A. Larsen pointed out that faculty are often pulled from teaching roles to fill administrative positions, and then fill up provided release time with teaching overload. This creates a situation where faculty administrators don't budget requisite time for their constituents. J. Rasmussen emphasized the importance of providing feedback and continually improving the rules. D. Allred requested a month to finalize the procedure for chair and dean selections and encouraged collaboration to improve the document.

C. Institutional Review Board

J. Rasmussen provided a summary of his recent research on the nature of creating an Institutional Review Board for Snow College. He highlighted that the IRB would not *drive* research surveys but would only *review* them. He suggested that the board should consist of five voting members to form a quorum, selected from faculty, staff, and administration, along with one community member (potentially someone who could volunteer as part of earning continuing education credits). This committee would need bylaws. Both faculty and students would need to be instructed on the purpose and nature of an IRB. This could be accomplished through a Canvas course or external training resources. Committee members would also need to have a strong grasp of Qualtrics software.

Senators discussed whether the IRB would be a Senate committee. M. Gowans acknowledged that a senator may need to double-up on committee assignments if this were to occur. There was general agreement that a subcommittee of senators needed to be formed to conduct further preparatory work.

J. Rasmussen mentioned that the committee wouldn't start from scratch as there was already information available for IRB. The primary focus would be on establishing how the committee would function and making the online presence more user-friendly.

D. Allred raised the point that there would be a new IR Director in place by January, and suggested that the school attorney should review the IRB process given potential litigation concerns. He suggested finding a meeting time between Senators and Academic Affairs, and J. Rasmussen agreed to bring up the topic in the Deans Council. He also agreed to continue as the interim lead on the project.

IV. Senate Discussions

A. Academic Integrity Policy

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

The subcommittee proposed recommendations for changes in the Academic Integrity Policy related to student use of generative A.I. A. Larsen noted that recent work involved pulling the draft section concerning creative arts and integrating it into the plagiarism section to provide a broader context for understanding the issues associated with A.I. use.

Following the discussion, a **motion** was made by A. Larsen, seconded by W. Jamison, and unanimously approved by all senators present to send the proposed revisions to the Curriculum and Academic Standards committees for further consideration.

V. Division & Committee Reports

M. Gowans invited any of the senators who had pressing committee matters to bring them up during this time.

(a) Advancement & Tenure Committee. D. Schugk mentioned that A&T is requesting a review of the sabbatical document due to perceived discrepancies. Currently, there are two or three different avenues for seeking approval for sabbatical, with one going through A&T and another not. A. Christensen pointed out that the Teaching & Learning Committee also reviewed extensive policy language about sabbaticals, and M. Brenchley noted that the Deans have also made changes to the document.

D. Allred clarified that the Deans reviewed the sabbatical policy as part of an Academic Affairs review for Policy 410: Sabbaticals. Some language in A&T Document 213 appears to overlap with the definitions discussed during that review. Resolving this issue could easily be a matter of ensuring alignment between two different policies.

M. Gowans suggested that D. Schugk review the document to identify the problem areas and bring them up for discussion at the next meeting. Relevant information should be shared with J. Thomas, and the question of where the sabbatical application should “originate” needs to be addressed. Deans, the TLC, and A&T all need to be involved in this process, and M. Gowans offered to assist in the coordination.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: S. Cox; **2nd:** W. Jamison

Approval: unanimous of all senators present

The Senate adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **November 29** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes taken by Jacob L. Thomas
Minutes approved November 29, 2023