



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

Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2024 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Welcome

Parliamentarian's Note: Pres. Matthew Gowans is out of the country on a school-related trip. Sandra Cox, Vice-President, presided in his stead.

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

Senators Present: Sandra Cox (VP), Karen Carter, Alan Christensen, Trent Fawcett, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Steve Hart, Dennis Schugk, Anita Slusser, Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Matthew Gowans (Pres)

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Michael Austin (Provost), David Allred (Assoc. Provost)

II. Meeting Minutes

The Senate reviewed the minutes from the February 14, 2024 meeting.

Motion to Approve: A. Larsen ; **2nd:** T. Fawcett

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	accepting nominations after Spring Break Chad Price not running for reelection
GE Committee—Ephraim seat	accepting nominations after Spring Break John Van Orman eligible for reelection
GE Committee—Richfield seat	accepting nominations after Spring Break Ryan Thalman ineligible for reelection
Senator—Humanities	division will hold elections this semester Matthew Gowans ineligible for reelection
Senator—Science & Math ✓ (by-election)	completed winner: Steve Hart
Senator—Social Science	division will hold elections this semester Dennis Schugk eligible for reelection

B. Library Committee Assignment. S. Hart will represent the Senate on the Library Committee. The committee meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 2:30pm. He reported that he met with them yesterday, Feb. 28.

C. Updates from the Faculty Senate President & Vice-President. S. Cox reported meeting with M. Gowans before his international travel. They discussed the most recent Deans Council meeting, which is currently addressing new faculty positions. She attended the meeting in his stead. She also indicated that M. Gowans had updated the list of college policies that should require at least some measure of Senate review. She referred to the file sent out with the minutes, noting that the document used to have both yellow and blue highlights, but now only the yellow highlights are relevant to the Senate. M. Gowans is collaborating with Paul Tew to determine the dates for the five-year renewal of

policies. The Parliamentarian will keep track of those dates so they can be brought before the Senate when review is due.

D. Academic Calendar for Spring 2025.

A. Larsen raised concerns from the Fine Arts faculty regarding class times and equitable hours for classes scheduled on Monday/Wednesday/Friday (MWF) versus Tuesday/Thursday (TR), especially in light of two Monday holidays in January and February. He expressed frustration about the recurring issue, highlighting that TR classes meet for 4-6 hours per week, whereas MW classes are impacted by two holidays, resulting in one fewer week of instruction. Larsen emphasized the need for Faculty Senate involvement to address the issue effectively.

The discussion revealed that the Registrar's Office makes recommendations for the academic calendar, which are then voted on by the College Council. However, some minimal adjustments can still be considered despite the five-year planning process. The impact of calendar changes, such as moving graduation to Fridays, was noted, along with the challenges faced by students and faculty due to scheduling inconsistencies.

Various viewpoints were shared, including concerns about the shortening of instruction days, challenges for students with off-campus jobs, and the need for more faculty involvement in decision-making processes. Suggestions were made to gather data on the number of affected students and to review survey data from previous years to inform discussions further.

Ultimately, the consensus was on the importance of fostering dialogue within the academic community to address these issues and receiving faculty input via the Senate. There was agreement on the need for transparency and collaboration in decision-making regarding the academic calendar. A. Larsen agreed to compare Snow College's academic calendar with other institutions and bring the information to the next meeting.

IV. Senate Initiatives

A. Supporting Adjunct Faculty Subcommittee

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

H. Withers reported that this ad hoc subcommittee has started compiling a suggestions document. She informed the other committee members that the document link has been sent to them. They aim to finalize the document in time to present it at their next meeting.

B. Academic Integrity Policy—Artificial Intelligence Subcommittee

T. Fawcett (de facto chair), A. Larsen, W. Jamison, and J. Wallace (sabbatical)

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 indicated that the policy has not yet been sent for legal review. He mentioned needing permission from Carson Howell, VP of Finances & Administrative Services, to incur legal fees, but assured the Senate that he would send it by the end of the week, pending this approval. Provost Austin also expressed confidence in the proposed change.

C. Institutional Review Board Development Subcommittee

T. Fawcett (co-chair), W. Jamison (co-chair), McKay West (non-senator, advisory); Jed Rasmussen (non-senator, advisory)

The subcommittee provided an update on its efforts to gather input from the divisions regarding the structure and function of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee. S. Cox emphasized the need to finalize the committee's structure during the meeting, focusing on its composition rather than policy or bylaw matters.

T. Fawcett highlighted previous discussions about the committee's composition, particularly regarding representation from each division, the inclusion of at-large faculty members, and the role of an outside community member. W. Jamison

expressed concerns about external involvement in decision-making processes and advocated for greater representation from individual divisions. A. Christensen proposed a flexible membership model to ensure representation from each division, and R. Keller emphasized the importance of equity and avoiding division bias.

After extensive deliberation, **T. Fawcett moved that the Senate establish a committee comprising five division representatives, one community member, and one Senate representative.** The Senate representative would lead the committee and provide guidance until formal bylaws were established. **R. Keller seconded the motion, and the motion passed with unanimous approval from all senators present.**

M. Gowans, assisted by J. Thomas, was tasked with contacting division deans to facilitate the IRB Committee's establishment. The work of this subcommittee is now concluded, and further measures will be accomplished by the standing committee itself.

D. Committee Reassignments

The addition of a new Senate standing committee posed problems for committee assignments. Senators discussed how to more equitably distribute these roles, and decided that those with lower-demand committee assignments (such as the Library Committee) would double-up as opposed to those with higher-demand assignments (such as the Advancement & Tenure Committee).

Ultimately, the Senate decided that W. Jamison will serve as the Senate representative on the new IRB Committee, and thus serve as interim chair until the committee was further established with bylaws. He will continue to serve as the Senate rep on the soon-to-be-renamed DIG Committee.

H. Withers volunteered to accept membership on the Service Learning Committee, thus freeing R. Keller to focus on the more demanding Academic Standards Committee. J. Thomas placed particular emphasis on the fact that as H. Withers is an adjunct instructor, that her taking on this role would be temporary pending further review next year. Senators further emphasized that not all adjunct reps in the future would be willing or able to take a committee assignment, and again agreed that future reevaluation will be needed.

E. Academic Standards Revision Subcommittee

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

R. Keller stated this committee's aim to review documents after Spring Break, focusing on standards from other institutions within and outside of USHE. They will assess specificity and content of new policy language, particularly regarding compliance with the legal standards outlined by Provost Austin. R. Keller further emphasized that the committee's responsibility lies in developing a long-term plan, not addressing short-term concerns.

Senators then discussed the immediate need for some policy changes and clarifications to address present questions and issues. **R. Keller moved that the language changes drafted by Provost Austin be implemented** in policy as a short-term, stopgap measure, to be later reviewed by the work of this ad hoc committee. **S. Cox seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by the Senate with one abstention by S. Hart.** Provost Austin agreed to send the document on to legal counsel.

V. Senate Training

A. Understanding Academic Freedom. Senators discussed their reading of Henry Reichmann's *Understanding Academic Freedom*, Chapter 4: "Citizenship. Senators principally grappled with the balance between academic freedom and self-censorship, considering the implications of doing so for effective teaching and institutional support.

R. Keller referenced portions of the work discussing concerns about self-censorship in academia, citing her experiences teaching African-American literature and facing offensive remarks in class. She highlighted the challenge of maintaining academic freedom amid fears of backlash and scrutiny, particularly in mixed classes. W. Jamison shared his experience teaching political science, expressing uncertainty about navigating sensitive topics like the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the definition of genocide. He questioned whether self-censorship serves students' best interests. T. Fawcett and A. Slusser raised additional points about the challenges of maintaining a public-facing persona and adjusting teaching approaches to different student audiences.

Provost Austin addressed these concerns about self-censorship, emphasizing the institution's strong support for faculty academic freedom within reasonable bounds. He advised appropriate caution however in public expression, including for administrative officials like himself.

VI. Adjournment

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

Approval: unanimous by all senators present.

The Senate adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **March 13, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas

Approved: March 13, 2024