



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

Meeting Minutes

April 24, 2024 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Welcome

The Senate was called to order at _____ p.m.

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

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Anita Slusser (Faculty Assoc. VP), Michael E. Olsen (GE Committee Science Division Rep), Tony Smith (Humanities senator-elect), Mike Brenchley (Deans), David Allred (Assoc. Provost), Mike Austin (Provost), Stacey Mccliff (College President)

II. Meeting Minutes

Review of minutes from the April 10 meeting.

Motion to Approve: A. Larsen; **2nd:** S. Hart

Approval: unanimous of all senators present.

III. Remarks from Pres. Mccliff

Pres. Mccliff opened by thanking everyone for their hard work, acknowledging that decision-making is challenging. She also expressed appreciation for the participation of Provost Austin and Assoc. Provost Allred.

A. 90-Credit Bachelor's Degrees at Snow College. Pres. Mccliff highlighted the possibility of offering 90-credit Bachelor's degrees and mentioned that the Utah

Commission of Higher Education and the Board of Higher Education support proposals for such degrees starting in January. However, there is no obligation for the college to implement this. The key is flexibility, and Pres. McIff encouraged faculty to consider how this option might fit into their departments and Snow College's broader mission. Other Bachelor's degrees are also possible. Salt Lake Community College will begin discussing proposals in the fall.

A. Christensen inquired about whether the proposals would be accepted, to which Pres. McIff clarified that they could but would need Board approval, as such degrees will fall outside the typical mission of two-year institutions. M. Gowans asked about other potential Bachelor's degrees, and Pres. McIff reiterated that while the college's mission would not change, they could lobby for new degrees if the need arose. A. Slusser questioned whether the proposed degrees should focus on rural areas, and Pres. McIff confirmed this but emphasized that arguments must demonstrate unmet needs in these fields. W. Jamison raised concerns about three-year degrees and their potential acceptance by graduate programs. Pres. McIff suggested that regional universities might adopt similar degrees and that accreditation is being fast-tracked.

B. HB261 (The DEI Bill). Pres. McIff discussed the implications of [HB261](#), which ends all diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives on college campuses. It also requires annual training for faculty on academic freedom and freedom of speech. This training would help employees distinguish between their personal political beliefs and their professional responsibilities. The bill also calls for the promotion of viewpoint diversity, which will be evaluated by the Board during annual reviews.

Additionally, D. Allred emphasized the need to focus on workforce preparation in new degree offerings. R. Keller expressed excitement about potential changes, emphasizing that adapting to new realities could provide unique opportunities for the college. A. Larsen and Pres. McIff discussed open enrollment policies at various Utah institutions and the importance of supporting students through these changes. Pres. McIff ended her remarks with a call for faculty to brainstorm innovative ideas over the summer that would allow Snow College to thrive in this new landscape.

IV. Committee & Subcommittee Reports

A. Supporting Adjunct Faculty Subcommittee

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

The committee stated that they are in a “good place” and that “things are moving forward.”

B. Academic Integrity Policy Update Subcommittee

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

R. Keller noted that the subcommittee plans to soon meet with Provost Austin. Provost Austin mentioned that Staci Taylor, the college’s Risk Manager, would like to meet with the entire subcommittee if possible. The current redlined policy will suffice for the summer, but something more permanent needs to be in place by fall. Legal counsel has approved the temporary measure, but S. Taylor has emphasized the importance of having a finalized policy by the start of fall. M. Gowans added that the Senate should be informed about any developments.

C. Institutional Review Board Development Subcommittee

W. Jamison (interim chair)

WJ noted that the new IRB Committee is still missing two members: one from the division of Fine Arts and one from Business & Tech. M. Gowans asked K. Carter and A. Christen about the election process for Business & Tech. A. Christensen said they would check with their Dean, noting that they hadn’t received a response. M. Gowans added that Fine Arts hadn’t completed their election either, and A. Larsen suggested it was in progress.

M. Gowans listed the current committee members: Jonathan Tyler (Science & Math), Eric Freeman (Social Science), Travis Schiffman (Humanities), and Cless Sue Young (community members). M. Gowans maintained his opinion that the committee should proceed with or without full representation.

D. Academic Calendar Subcommittee

A. Larsen (chair), S. Hart, and W. Jamison

A. Larsen reported that the subcommittee met with D. Allred last week, who agreed to include a senator in the future on the academic calendar planning committee.

Although next year's calendar is set (2024-2025), future years are open for discussion. The committee aims to improve methods to manage calendar drift, and an audit revealed that 203 courses across 10-12 disciplines (including art, chemistry, English, history, and more) are affected by the Monday/Wednesday scheduling issue after two Monday holidays in January and February. These classes lose an entire week of instruction.

R. Keller confirmed that this number includes IVC courses. A. Larsen noted that this is significant, as these MW or M-only classes are impacted by the shortened schedule. Graduation was moved to Friday instead of Saturday primarily to accommodate families, but some senators questioned this reasoning. D. Allred added that Marci Larsen, the President's Chief of Staff, gave additional reasons, and any concerns about gaps in the schedule could be addressed by the calendar committee.

A. Christensen raised the issue of finals overlapping with Richfield graduation, which happens a day earlier. A. Larsen emphasized the need for flexibility, whether by moving graduation back to Saturday or adjusting the Monday schedule, especially given how many courses and disciplines are affected. He also shared the audit list with M. Gowans and noted that MWF classes are less affected than MW or M-only classes since they meet three times per week.

M. Gowans asked if D. Allred if Academic Affairs was open to further discussions. D. Allred agreed, stating that the issue involves both faculty and staff. The next calendar committee meeting would address these matters, with a senator sitting on the committee. Steve Hart volunteered for this role.

W. Jamison mentioned that Academic Affairs has about \$1,000 allocated for IRB training. M. Gowans encouraged work on bylaws and training, and W. Jamison added that they expect to be ready by next semester.

V. Senate Business

A. GE Plebiscite on Credits. J. Thomas noted that the General Education Committee, after a year's worth of discussion on the question, will soon invite the faculty to vote on how to reduce GE course offerings to 27-30 credits. He stated his belief that this is probably the most consequential faculty vote in recent history, and invited senators to strongly encourage all full-time faculty in their divisions to participate. Michael Olsen from the GE Committee was on hand to field questions from senators, as was Trent Fawcett, who sits on the GE Committee as Senate rep.

T. Fawcett reported that the goal is to lower the total to 30 or fewer credits, with 27 already prescribed, leaving only three flexible credits. Currently, there are seven required credits, including Integrated Explorations (IE), Foundations, and a one-credit science lab tied to GE science classes. TF emphasized the spirited debates within the committee and noted that while he voted against the current proposal, he sought to represent the committee impartially and reached out to M. Olsen for further insights.

M. Olsen explained that the GE committee had been debating this issue for a year and conducted surveys with four potential options, though only three were presented for a faculty vote. The fourth option, reducing Foundations to two credits and keeping the science lab, was not included due to concerns about complexity for students and coordination with advisors. Additionally, one of the institution's key feeder schools, Utah Valley University, fulfills its three-credit requirement through Foundations, which would be disrupted if Foundations were reduced to two credits.

S. Hart suggested revisiting the fourth option, arguing it had some merit and might be popular. W. Jamison also noted faculty members had voiced support for various options, questioning whether the decision was being rushed. M. Olsen explained that any changes must be in place by Fall 2025 to meet catalog deadlines, and Provost Austin suggested October 1 as the decision deadline. R. Keller raised concerns about basing decisions on UVU's requirements, as their policies could change in the future.

A. Larsen asked how reducing Foundations to two credits would affect recruitment and teaching loads. Provost Austin acknowledged the potential disruption but stressed that faculty must make the decision, which he would implement as long as it had majority support. S. Hart emphasized that while cutting GE credits would be

simple, the 2-1 option would complicate implementation, requiring a complete overhaul of Foundations and labs.

T. Smith inquired whether the 30-credit limit was mandatory, and Provost Austin clarified that the state allows for flexibility between 27 and 30 credits, though anything above 30 would require specific configurations. T. Fawcett supported the 2-1 option, noting the transferability issues and the complexity it would introduce for faculty contracts and GE course reconfiguration.

M. Gowans reiterated that the Senate’s role in this matter is to provide feedback, not direct the process. D. Schugk asked if courses losing GE designation would still be offered as electives, and T. Fawcett responded by expressing concern that student enrollment might not justify keeping non-required Foundations courses. M. Gowans asked M. Olsen to communicate the Senate’s discussion back to the GE committee, which he agreed to do.

B. Senate Presidency. J. Thomas noted that some questions regarding Senate leadership needed to be decided immediately. These questions have arisen because the Communications Dept. has moved from the Fine Arts Division to Humanities. This causes an issue as one of the Communications Senators, Sandra Cox, represents Fine Arts, not Humanities, and her seat will technically be dissolved. This is further complicated by the fact that S. Cox has been elected Senate President for 2024-2025. The Senate needs to decide (1) whether an additional overhang seat will be created for S. Cox to enable her to fulfill her elected role next year, and (2) if a temporary seat is created, whether it will be granted a vote. Senators voted on each question separately by secret ballot (slips of paper put into a hat). The results were as follows:

Question	YEA	NAY	ABST
(1) Shall a temporary overhang seat be created to accommodate S. Cox as next year’s Senate President?	12	0	0
(2) Shall this overhang seat be granted a vote?	7	4	1

Result. Both measures passed. Thus, for the 2024-2025 school year, S. Cox will be a temporary “overhang” senator in order to serve as Senate President, and will also be granted a vote.

C. Future Vision for the Senate. Senators discussed which committees should require a sitting senator, considering whether some committees should come under Senate oversight and whether others may no longer need a senator. Similarly, M. Gowans asked if there were committees related to academic freedom and shared governance that should be brought under Senate purview, emphasizing that governance extends beyond academic freedom. S. Hart agreed, noting that faculty voices are essential in some committees beyond just academic freedom. M. Gowans then asked for input on which committees should be taken to the Office of Academic Affairs for consideration before the next Senate meeting in the fall.

W. Jamison suggested that the Library Committee might not need to be a Senate committee anymore. A. Larsen, who has served on the Library Committee twice, pointed out that it had addressed issues of academic freedom in the past, such as book bans, but W. Jamison argued that this didn’t necessarily require Senate involvement. S. Hart added that all committees should be considered equally, without viewing some as “posh” and others as “hard work.” M. Gowans reiterated that the focus should be on academic freedom.

Committees under discussion to have a sitting senator included Concurrent Enrollment, Online Excellence, and Competency-Based Education (CBE). W. Jamison expressed concern about the growing number of committees, potentially exceeding available senators. T. Fawcett suggested combining some committees, while D. Allred mentioned that new committee connections might be beneficial.

M. Gowans proposed considering whether the Honors and Service Learning committees could become subcommittees under Curriculum, while existing subcommittees like the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) and General Education (GE) could become full committees. A. Larsen suggested renaming the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) to “Professional Development,” linking it to more areas and potentially increasing productivity.

As the meeting drew to an end, no final decisions were made regarding Senate committees, and the matter will be tabled until the next school year.

As the meeting concluded, R. Keller acknowledged that this was M. Gowans's last senate meeting as Senate President. She thanked him for his leadership for the past two years, which was followed by applause from all present.

VI. Adjournment

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

Approval: unanimous of all senators present.

The Senate adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **September 11, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas

Approved: September 11, 2024