



Sandra Cox, President
Trent Fawcett, Vice-President
Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

Meeting Minutes

March 26, 2025 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Meeting Minutes

A. The Senate was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

Senators Present: Sandra Cox (Pres)*, Trent Fawcett (VP, presiding), Alan Christensen, Steve Hart, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Charley Roetting, Dennis Schugk, Anita Slusser (sub for J. Wallace), Tony Smith, Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Karen Carter, Jeff Wallace (sub: A. Slusser)

*Pres. Sandra Cox participated in the meeting remotely due to illness. VP Trent Fawcett presided in her stead.

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Mike Austin (Provost), Kristi Stevens (Assoc Provost), Jess Jones (senator-elect)

B. Minutes from March 12

Motion to Approve: A. Larsen; 2nd: A. Christensen

Approval: unanimous of all present

II. Senate Organization

A. Remaining Spring 2025 Mtgs: April 9, April 23

B. Feed Your Senate Committees!

(S. Cox; covered by Academic Affairs)

C. Updates from Division Senate Elections

1. *Fine Arts* - C. Roetting reported that there is no official word at this point. A. Larsen suggested the Dean be contacted.
2. *Faculty Association* - A. Slusser reported that elections will be held soon. The FA is considering a change to its bylaws to ensure representation from the Richfield campus.

D. At-Large Committee Elections

1. **College Council Election—Ephraim Seat.** Ballots were sent out earlier today via Microsoft Forms; the election will close on Monday at 11:59 p.m. The two candidates for this seat are Erick Faatz (Humanities) and Wes Jamison (Social Science).

E. **Senate Leadership Elections.** Trent Fawcett will serve as Senate President for 2025-2026. Dennis Schugk has been elected to serve as Vice-President. A formal announcement will be made after the College Council election has been decided.

III. Administrative Updates

A. Updates from the Office of the President

No updates at present.

B. Updates from the Office of Academic Affairs

1. *Earlier Email.* Prior to the meeting, Provost Austin sent out an email to all faculty regarding legislative updates on [HB 265](#) (Strategic Reinvestment planning underway, no anticipated layoffs), [HB 261](#) (syllabus publication updates for Summer 2025), [SB 258](#) (inmate education funding disappointment but Pell Grant option moving forward), and [SB 334](#) (USU pilot GE program may shape future system-wide requirements).
 - a) *SB 334: USU pilot GE program.* Provost Austin introduced SB 334's impact at Utah State University, noting that USU is combining its English (E1 and E2) and Humanities (HU) GE requirements into a single, integrated 9-credit "super-course" with highly specific content regarding

Western Civilization. In addition, the legislation prescribes a significant overhaul of the American Institutions (AI) GE requirement (3 credits), but would not be a part of the “super-course.”

In response to questions, the Provost emphasized that while this model is currently limited to USU, it’s possible that the legislature will push for system-wide changes after the four-year pilot. However, he assured the Senate that USHE and institutional leaders—including the Commissioner—are working to preserve flexibility and institutional autonomy.¹ Faculty at USU have responded to the changes, and the Commissioner’s Office views this approach as a compromise that helped avoid stricter mandates.

There was also discussion about transfer implications. The Provost clarified that all general education credits—including E1, E2, and American Institutions—will continue to transfer between institutions as usual, including during the transitional period. The current GE framework remains in place system-wide.

- b) *HB 261 Syllabus Updates.* Regarding syllabus publication mandates under HB 261, the Provost explained that faculty are now required to publicly list major assignments, a brief description of each, and how those assignments will contribute to the final grade. All syllabus information must be published at least 14 days before the semester begins. Although this may feel like additional oversight, he reassured faculty that if their syllabi are already clear for students, they will likely meet audit requirements.

- 2. **Academic Workload Policy.** T. Fawcett introduced the draft revision of Policy #404 (Academic Workload), emphasizing the need for feedback, particularly on how best to distinguish between policy and procedure. Much of the discussion centered on whether the additive formula for faculty chair release should be codified in

¹ In a follow-up email on Friday, March 28, Provost Austin shared [an article from The Salt Lake Tribune](#) which reported that Commissioner Landward’s clarification that SB 334’s new Western Civ-focused curriculum at USU is a pilot and won’t be mandated systemwide. While the bill allows for review and possible expansion by 2029, Landward emphasized faculty discretion and institutional differences. The goal is to improve general education, he stated, not enforce a uniform model.

policy or housed separately as a procedure. While some argued that keeping it procedural would allow for adaptability, others noted the importance of transparency and continuity, especially as administrative leadership changes. There was consensus that procedures should be clearly documented and that any changes – particularly those affecting workload or compensation – should involve Faculty Senate review. It was proposed that policy indicate where such procedures are housed and clarify that Senate approval is required for any changes.

Additionally, the committee affirmed support for adding Curriculum, A&T, and GE chairs, as well as the Senate President, to the list of roles receiving ongoing stipends. These additions remain within the current budget, staying under the \$50,000 allocation.

C. Updates from Deans Council

1. *Lorenzo Snow Awards*. Dean Brenchley reported that select Lorenzo Snow Awards and other student awards are proceeding.
2. *Open Faculty Positions*. A major topic of discussion was how to rank and advertise open faculty positions amid the uncertainty of reallocation timelines and funding. While three one-year appointments (band director, elementary education, and a math professor in Richfield) have been converted to full-time positions, decisions on other roles likely won't be finalized until after May 1. Senators discussed the possibility of advertising positions with a disclaimer like "contingent upon funding," though HR is hesitant about this language. Provost Austin indicated he will request an exception from HR to allow postings before funding is finalized.
3. *Prison Education Director*. T. Fawcett noted that the Director of Prison Education will serve as a faculty fellow for the upcoming school year.

D. Updates from College Council (S. Cox)

Nothing at this time.

IV. Senate Business

A. Proposed Policy #382 Discussion

Senators held a robust discussion on the draft update of Policy #382 (Outside Employment), which requires notification or approval for outside work to avoid conflicts of interest. T. Fawcett noted the policy is moving quickly through review but has generated significant concern among both faculty and staff. S. Hart reported receiving many critical comments from his division, especially about vague or overly broad language, particularly sections 4.3 and 4.4, which seem to conflict in tone—*encouraging* notification of outside employment in one place and *requiring* approval in another. R. Keller emphasized that adjuncting elsewhere, especially in summer, is common and sometimes essential for faculty livelihood.

Provost Austin clarified that while the policy borrows from UVU, its intent is to ensure Deans are aware of possible conflicts—not to micromanage. Still, concerns were raised about the potential overreach of section 4.8, which prohibits use of Snow College resources for outside work, even when incidental. S. Hart and A. Christensen advocated for clarifying this distinction, suggesting language about “incidental use” drawn from other institutions like SUU and UVU. The Provost agreed in principle and noted the need to define business ventures and protect institutional interests from legal risk.

Overall, there was general consensus on the need for a policy but also broad agreement that the current draft is too restrictive, inconsistent, and unclear in several key areas. Senators were encouraged to share feedback with College Council representatives, with T. Fawcett reminding faculty that even minor changes would trigger another 30-day review period. Jess Jones, current Ephraim rep on College Council, confirmed the review would remain open, and revisions would be considered.

B. Institutional Goals Form & Post-Tenure Review

R. Keller reported no new updates. She will continue working with Academic Affairs to streamline the goal-setting process. This item will be removed from future agendas.

C. Committee Reports

1. *Calendaring Committee (S. Hart)*. A senator asked whether faculty have input on the timing of Fall reporting and calendar changes. S. Hart, Senate rep to the Calendaring Committee, noted that while a past survey gathered broad input, the calendaring committee has not recently reconvened. W. Jamison agreed with S. Hart that there is interest in revisiting the calendar, particularly for future semesters.
2. *Curriculum Committee (CC)*. T. Fawcett noted the CC has been talking about standardizing policies and procedures.
3. *First-Year Experience (FYE)*. R. Keller, serving as Faculty Fellow for FYE, shared updates on orientation efforts aligned with faculty feedback. New outcomes have been developed based on input from deans and faculty, emphasizing the importance of students being prepared on the first day (e.g., accessing Canvas, ordering books). As a result, Canvas will now open at 8am on the Monday before classes begin, and Orientation will include activities ensuring students log into Canvas in advance. Faculty are encouraged to publish at least basic information (syllabus, office hours) early to support student success and reduce confusion.

The Fall calendar includes a Wednesday start to instruction, with Monday and Tuesday reserved for Orientation (contract days but no classes), a longer Fall Break, and an added day off in September—maintaining the required number of instructional days. Associate Provost Kristi Stevens emphasized that strong faculty-student connections during Orientation are key to student retention, and new strategies like interest-based groupings are being explored. T. Fawcett noted that these developments reflect ongoing Senate discussions from earlier in the semester.

4. *General Education Committee (GE)*. S. Hart reported that the committee discussed the implications of the new USU general education model but spent significant time on two ongoing issues. First, there is an unresolved question about how GE assessment should be handled—specifically, the balance between committee involvement and minimizing faculty burden. The focus is shifting

toward assessing transferable skills rather than just content, while also finding ways to demonstrate the value of GE across campus.

Second, the committee raised concerns about tensions between departments and programs when it comes to required coursework. For example, a program might require courses from another department (e.g., Engineering requiring Math), raising the question of who has ultimate authority. K. Stevens added that some departments have attempted to dictate program structures in ways that didn't serve the programs' needs. GE identified this as an important issue for future discussion.

5. *Teaching & Learning Committee (TLC)*. A. Larsen reported that beginning in Fall, all Canvas courses older than five years will be deleted. However, sandboxes and any course content can be preserved or rolled over as needed. Regarding Lunch Bunch scheduling, he suggested alternating meeting days to increase accessibility, especially for those who cannot attend on Tuesdays. K. Stevens confirmed that starting soon, Lunch Bunch will alternate monthly between Tuesday and Wednesday, and TLC members are encouraged to gauge interest in alternative days among their peers.

D. Other/Future Items of Discussion

1. **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

W. Jamison reported that the IRB is working diligently to finalize a streamlined Kuali form for the IRB process within the next 4–5 weeks. The goal is to complete this work by the end of the term.

2. **Improved Training for Committee Chairs**

S. Hart, R. Keller, and A. Christensen have agreed to meet to discuss this soon.

V. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: C. Roetting; 2nd: W. Jamison

Approval: unanimous of all senators present

The Senate adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **Wednesday, April 9, 2025 from 3:30-5:00 p.m.** in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas

Approved: April 9, 2025