



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

## Meeting Minutes

September 25, 2024 @ 3:30pm

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### I. Call to Order & Welcome

The Senate was called to order at 3:31 p.m.

**Senators Present:** Sandra Cox, Trent Fawcett, Alan Christensen, Steve Hart, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Dennis Schugk, Tony Smith, Jeff Wallace, Hilary Withers

**Senators Absent:** Karen Carter, Charley Roetting

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

### II. Meeting Minutes

**Motion to Approve:** W. Jamison ; **2nd:** S. Hart

**Approval:** unanimous of all present

### III. Senate Organization

#### A. Senate & Chairs Luncheon

All senators are invited to a “Welcome Back Lunch” with Senate committee chairs on Friday, September 27, from 12:30-1:20 p.m. Trent Fawcett will coordinate the event, which will take place in Founders Hall, with turkey being provided for the meal. Senators are encouraged to extend invitations to committee chairs and, if possible, to the Student Body Vice-President. D. Allred

will personally invite Jill Trythall. President Cox is scheduled to speak at the event.

W. Jamison raised the need to clarify committee roles, particularly within the A&T (Appointment and Tenure) process. He emphasized that chairs and their committees play a critical role in A&T, and active participation in committees is crucial for involvement in this process. There was also some discussion about a survey related to committee work.

## **B. Updated Senate Roster**

Senators reviewed the updated Senate Roster with committee assignments, and some suggestions for clarity were made.

## **C. GE Election Referendum Report**

Senators reviewed the GE referendum report, which outlines the vote totals and election procedures from the end of the past spring semester. The result of the vote was to end the Foundations courses, at least as required for GE.

W. Jamison expressed nostalgia for the Foundations program, mentioning how great it was and how sad he felt about it being phased out. He hoped future versions of the program might still include similar elements. D. Allred shared that during a recent meeting, he learned that the Agriculture Dept. has created their own Foundations class. He added that much has been learned from the Foundations program, and there are likely still valuable applications. S. Cox asked if the program could continue as an elective, which was confirmed. W. Jamison raised concerns about how to compensate professors, asking if they would be paid for all three credit hours, which remained an open conversation.

## **D. GE Committee—At-Large Representation Eligibility**

**1. Background.** J. Thomas noted that recently, a first-year faculty member was self-nominated for the at-large Richfield seat. There were several other nominees, but only this faculty member accepted; thus the seat was awarded to them after the nomination deadline passed. This person did not consult their department chair or dean before accepting the nomination. When the general announcement was made, the department chair sent an email saying that the nominee had not been approved to accept this position, and asked that the announcement email be rescinded. The main concern was that this faculty

member was new and that their next semester would be overloaded. The chair expressed complete confidence in the faculty member's ability, but felt that serving on GE would be too much at this stage. Since there is no indication in the Senate or GE Committee bylaws about whether a department chair or other administrator can nix a nomination, candidacy, or election to an at-large seat on the GE Committee or the College Council, J. Thomas asked senators and guests present for clarification.

**2. Discussion.** S. Hart emphasized the importance of considering input from Department Chairs or Deans during decision-making processes. He stated that there should be a formal way to acknowledge objections from these leaders, even though the issue at hand does not directly involve division representation. Faculty should have the autonomy to manage their time, but it's important not to bypass the chair/dean's input.

S. Cox discussed her conversation with the dept. chair in question. The chair suggested adding a clause to the bylaws that requires chairs and deans to be informed, which could prevent future issues. S. Hart agreed and emphasized the need for a general approach.

R. Keller supported the idea that faculty members are capable of managing their own schedules and responsibilities, and that it would be unusual for a chair to block participation if the faculty member understood the implications. S. Cox acknowledged that the issue stemmed from a lack of communication with the dept. chair and again suggested adding language to the bylaws to address this. Tony Smith expressed concerns about giving too much power to chairs, suggesting that consultation is important, but a "veto" could be excessive.

Dean Brenchley elaborated on the need to balance authority with protection. Some new faculty members may not fully understand the burden of committee work, so a phased approach to their responsibilities could be beneficial. The discussion also touched on the scenario where faculty members under disciplinary action might be nominated for committees, further highlighting the need for clear communication between chairs and faculty. A. Larsen pointed out that policy already exists to limit the workload for first-year faculty, preventing them from taking on major committee assignments. M. Brenchley and S. Cox agreed that discussions about overload should happen early to avoid such situations.

**3. Richfield Representation.** The conversation also addressed the challenges of finding a representative from Richfield, with S. Cox noting that Heidi Johnson had provided names of potential candidates, but many were fatigued from previous service. J. Thomas confirmed that the committee could still function without a representative from Richfield, though it remained an important issue to address. S. Hart and S. Cox noted the challenges of finding representation from Richfield, but agreed that it was necessary due to the significance of Tech Ed classes on that campus.

## **IV. Senate Business**

### **A. Deans Council Report**

**1. The Future of Student Clubs.** S. Cox mentioned that there has been extensive discussion about the future of student clubs, noting that clubs will no longer have advisors and will change significantly, with some being removed from departmental oversight. WJ expressed concern about the potential impact on club funding and the ability to maintain clubs. S. Cox clarified that the changes are driven by legal mandates. D. Allred added that there are external pressures, but no formal plan is in place yet. The current proposal suggests that student clubs not associated with academic departments will only have general oversight from Student Life, although funding for these clubs would still come from Student Life. Departmental clubs would remain under their respective departments.

W. Jamison raised further concerns about the PRIDE Club, questioning whether the changes were politically motivated. D. Allred explained that the primary political influence comes from a State Board mandate on institutional neutrality, rather than HB261 on DEI matters. He noted that having an employee-led club could raise questions about the institution's sponsorship and risk management, especially regarding club travel and insurance.

S. Cox and D. Allred acknowledged that the situation is unfortunate for clubs, but emphasized the need to balance advocacy for students with protecting the institution. K. Stevens encouraged suggestions for navigating the issue. W. Jamison requested more information about whether club participation has increased, to which S. Cox responded that the Snowdrift Club (newspaper) had

grown from 15 to 45 members in a year. R. Keller added that, according to law, funding for clubs must be offered equitably, which has been followed to maintain neutrality. D. Allred confirmed that funding for clubs hasn't been fully clarified and expressed concern about the potential disappearance of clubs without departmental support, particularly at a two-year school where clubs need to be reestablished annually.

T. Smith emphasized the importance of tracking club growth or decline through numbers, noting that documentation could reveal trends and influence future decisions. D. Allred suggested the Faculty Senate could request retention data from the Provost to further understand the impact of these changes. T. Fawcett added that clubs with larger attendance could qualify for additional funding. A. Christnesen cautioned that attendance numbers should differentiate between registered members and active participants.

D. Allred recommended coordinating efforts with the Provost and pointed out that the topic will be on the Cabinet agenda soon. D. Schugk expressed concerns about managing club policies without a school representative, warning that outside organizations might take over clubs. R. Keller asked if outside agencies could still form clubs, including religious organizations. K. Stevens and D. Allred mentioned previous discussions about requiring an employee advisor for such clubs, but the current status was unclear.

**2. Syllabi Updates & Removing DEI Language.** S. Cox reported that the Curriculum Committee is working on simplifying procedures for approving syllabi, though no final decisions have been made. The aim is to reduce redundant steps and ensure syllabi are prepared on time, especially with the transition to the new system, CourseLeap.

Senators also discussed the removal of DEI language from syllabi. K. Stevens explained that this language needed to be taken out of the master syllabi, and that Academic Affairs would handle final cleanup. The goal was to remove these statements from all syllabi as soon as possible to be in compliance with state law. A. Larsen raised concerns about whether non-specialists might alter important content as the syllabi are revised, as DEI language had been embedded in syllabi for several years. However, K. Stevens and D. Allred clarified that this process would not impact course content, only specific language that needed to be removed.

K. Stevens also mentioned that many changes would be managed through Simple Syllabus and standardized templates. While there were concerns about academic freedom, it was emphasized that individual syllabi creators could still contribute customized statements if there were concerns. State legislators are overseeing compliance, and non-compliance could lead to financial penalties.

Overall, the majority of syllabi changes were expected to be straightforward, but any complex cases would be handled in consultation with faculty. The discussion concluded with an agreement to provide examples of the changes, with some members noting that their syllabi may not require significant adjustments.

## **B. Stipends & Course Releases Ad Hoc Committee**

T. Fawcett and D. Schugk, ad hoc committee members

The committee held a meeting to discuss the allocation of time and resources for department chairs. T. Fawcett explained that their primary focus was identifying the tasks that consume the majority of chairs' time. D. Schugk added that the committee's goal is to determine how to weigh different responsibilities in terms of time and effort. To achieve this, they plan to distribute a survey to gather data on how chairs allocate their time across various duties. The committee aims to develop a formula for allocating release time or stipends based on these findings. For now, they are focusing on department chairs as the first priority. T. Fawcett noted that part of the survey's purpose is to explore whether any responsibilities can be streamlined or removed without compromising oversight, potentially freeing up chairs' time for other duties.

## **C. Academic Integrity Policy Update Subcommittee**

R. Keller (chair) and A. Christensen

The discussion on forming the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) highlighted several important points. The Senate is responsible for forming this committee, which will have three faculty seats. The committee will retain the Registrar but no longer include staff members. Concerns were raised about the lack of faculty awareness regarding changes in policies, particularly in cases of academic dishonesty. Currently, instructors are still submitting old forms that should now go to the Dean of Students. It was agreed that the Senate and Academic Affairs need to improve communication with faculty on the new process.

S. Cox suggested removing outdated forms from the website to ensure documents are routed correctly, while R. Keller mentioned that the new policy includes an appeals process. D. Allred emphasized the need for collaborative problem-solving between the Senate, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs to implement these changes smoothly.

There was also discussion about how the seats on the ASC would be filled, with suggestions for an at-large vote and clarifications needed on term lengths. The committee was tasked with investigating bylaws to clarify some of these processes, with the goal of streamlining the structure and making it more efficient. The new committee structure, including the role of Curriculum Committee, was also debated, particularly with regard to simplifying their workload and reducing bureaucratic processes.

#### **D. Institutional Review Board Development Subcommittee**

W. Jamison (interim chair), Tony Smith

W. Jamison reported that the committee met for the first time and worked on establishing its mission and scope. They also discussed leadership roles and are in the process of building a Quali form to streamline submissions to the IRB for quicker turnaround. The committee plans to meet again in two weeks.

#### **E. Supporting Adjunct Faculty Subcommittee**

H. Withers (chair) and W. Jamison

H. Withers mentioned that the committee hasn't met yet since she just returned to the country. She plans to send an email to D. Allred soon. The only question raised by senators was whether to add a third member. W. Jamison responded that they would manage fine without one.

## V. Adjournment

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

**Approval:** unanimous of all faculty present

The Senate adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **October 9, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

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**Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas**

**Approved:** October 23, 2024