



Matthew Gowans, President
Jed Rasmussen, Vice-President
Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2023, 3:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Senate was called to order at 3:34 p.m.

Senators Present: Matthew Gowans (Pres), Jed Rasmussen (VP), Sandra Cox, Trent Fawcett, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Dennis Schugk, Jeff Wallace, *Whitney Ward, Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Karen Carter, Alan Christensen (substitute: Whitney Ward)

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Stacey McIff (College Pres.), Michael Austin (Provost), David Allred (Assoc. Provost), Mike Brenchley (Deans)

II. Remarks from College President & New Provost

M. Gowans welcomed President McIff and new Provost Austin as visitors. They were invited to give remarks.

- A. Snow College President Stacey McIff.** Pres. McIff stated that she wanted to discuss her office's recent town hall meeting. She emphasized the need for transparency and mentioned that the decision to withdraw from third-party agreements with Sundance (competency-based education) and ceasing to take-in Arizona football students would result in a drop in enrollment from this fall to last fall. She noted her concerns and the support of the State Board for this decision, emphasizing the importance of focusing on meaningful and sustainable growth. She explained that even the Arizona program, which had

initially seen high enrollment, had run into financial issues, leading to the termination of the agreement in September.

Regarding the Sundance program, Pres. McIff highlighted the challenge of identifying instructors for Sundance courses and their qualifications. She also discussed the impact of the Sundance program on the DFWI rate and the need to work towards achieving higher success rates. She stressed the importance of faculty's role in student retention and encouraged everyone to contribute to keeping students enrolled.

T. Fawcett inquired about the quantity of students to be lost due to the decision. Pres. McIff explained that approximately 550 students would be affected. She also mentioned the financial implications and the need for careful planning to maintain the enrollment baseline.

A. Larsen asked about the financial arrangement with Sundance. Pres. McIff clarified that 82 percent of the tuition was shared with Sundance, resulting in a loss of revenue. The Arizona students were paying full online tuition, thus the termination would lead to a more substantial tuition loss.

R. Keller inquired about the fate of young men from the Arizona program who will no longer be enrolled. Pres. McIff explained that the current enrollees would be honored for the fall semester, and some might stay through the spring as regular online students.

M. Gowans expressed appreciation for these decisions and emphasized the importance of meaningful growth. He also commended Pres. McIff for gaining support from the Commissioner and the Board of Trustees. He mentioned future conversations about how faculty can assist with recruitment and retention.

B. New Provost Michael Austin. Provost Austin discussed the appointment of a new Director of Institutional Research to improve data collection and retention interventions in Academic Affairs. The goal is to redesign data usage for the college's success.

Pres. McIff mentioned the challenges arising from dashboard discrepancies and how data would be crucial for their success.

A. Larsen raised concerns about the reduction in General Education (GE) requirements and how it might affect retention. Provost Austin explained the need for meta-majors to compensate for the reduction in GE hours and maintain robust majors.

III. Minutes from Previous Meeting

- A. Review of minutes from September 27, 2023**
- B. Vote to approve or amend minutes**

Motion to Approve: J. Wallace **2nd:** A. Larsen

Approval: all senators present; one abstention: W. Ward

IV. Informational Items & General Questions

- A. Updates from the Faculty Senate President (M. Gowans)**

1. Enrollment. M. Gowans reported meeting with Pres. McIff to address the enrollment issues mentioned earlier. The president's commitment to addressing these concerns was appreciated, and faculty expressed support for her efforts.

The idea of having a senator participate in an enrollment committee was also raised. This senator would provide input and gather information on how faculty can contribute to enrollment initiatives, even though they wouldn't have voting rights on the committee.

2. Student Payscale. J. Rasmussen raised the student hourly payment question that has been discussed in previous meetings—about whether departments should be able to have the right to set the wages for student employees. His division had some concerns about the lack of progress in resolving this issue. It was noted that this directive came from HR without going through any formal governing body on campus. There were additional questions about how grant funding might affect student pay rates.

B. Updates from Deans Council (J. Rasmussen)

1. Adjunct Payment Problems. J. Rasmussen discussed issues related to adjunct faculty payments through the Kuali software program. Academic Affairs expressed its willingness to address these problems, particularly those where paperwork was submitted on time but encountered software-related glitches.

Provost Austin highlighted that D. Allred had identified 11 faculty members who had completed all requirements on time but had not received their payments. He assured that these faculty members would be paid the following day, thanks to these efforts. VP of Finances Carson Howell, in response to their case, had directed that the payments should be processed.

J. Rasmussen acknowledged H. Withers as the adjunct representative senator. The hope was that by improving communication and support for adjunct teaching, they could establish a direct line of communication through her. This would enable adjunct faculty to reach out to her as a valuable resource for dialogue and assistance when matters like this arise.

2. New IRB Senate Committee. The Senate discussed concerns regarding Institutional Review Board (IRB) representation and procedures at the institution. It was noted that the previous IR director had been the sole IRB representative, and in their absence, Asst. Provost Lindsay Chaney had been handling related paperwork.

Provost Austin emphasized the need for a faculty committee to oversee the IRB. The term “Board” was intended to represent a committee rather than an individual. While no specific proposals were made during the meeting, the idea was to gather insights from other IRBs in the state and other educational institutions, create a committee, provide mission and bylaw examples, and determine ways to involve faculty.

M. Gowans expressed the goal of addressing this matter within this semester. J. Rasmussen highlighted the importance of expeditiously obtaining data for IRB-related matters.

The discussion delved into the federal and state guidelines governing IRBs, including the necessity of an external member with medical and research expertise. It was also suggested that applicants should be trained in research ethics.

The senators deliberated on the ethical considerations and laws governing surveys and research on campus. While there was a consensus that students should be encouraged to inquire and learn, the distinction between rigorous research and casual surveys was emphasized. The potential for a prolonged IRB process and its impact on student projects was discussed, highlighting the need for efficient procedures.

W. Jamison expressed concerns about the IRB process impeding open discourse, especially for student clubs and groups. Provost Austin explained that the IRB often reviews and exempts cases, and T. Fawcett mentioned the importance of expediting student projects. There was an emphasis on distinguishing between academic research and general surveys to maintain open communication on campus.

MOTION: J. Rasmussen moved that a senator gather this data on an Institutional Review Board (as described above) and bring it back to the senate soon; he himself volunteered to take on this role. **2nd:** T. Fawcett. **Vote:** Unanimous of all senators president.

3. Academic Calendar Update. M. Brenchley provided an update on the college academic calendar during the meeting. The proposed change includes having 70 days for each semester. The adjustment involves introducing a two-day Fall Break and a day between spring break and the end of the semester. This change would standardize the calendar, which has previously fluctuated between 71 to 73 days per semester.

T. Fawcett raised concerns about the impact of this change on science classes, where knowledge builds sequentially, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a consistent calendar for these subjects. M. Brenchley clarified that both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs were part of the decision-making process regarding this calendar adjustment.

C. Invitations of Guests to Classes. W. Jamison raised the issue of having invited non-student guests in class. There were recent cases of students feeling uncomfortable by the guests certain faculty had invited to class more than once. He mentioned that there was no existing policy to address this situation. The current policies relate to public-speaking guests, but not specifically to guests in regular class sessions.

Senators discussed the considerations of academic freedom and free speech. It was emphasized that when someone is invited to a class, their speech is subject to the same limitations as the instructors' in terms of free speech. However, it was also noted that the institution could face accountability for what guests say in class.

Provost Austin expressed that academic freedom should govern invitations by professors and that university policy should not directly address this issue. He urged caution, as pushing for policies could lead to external scrutiny and potential restrictions on academic freedom.

The conversation also delved into the role of academic audits for individuals attending classes frequently. The need to consider FERPA regulations in cases involving non-affiliated individuals in class is important. It was suggested that FERPA might already contain provisions addressing this matter, and there was a call to explore existing policies more thoroughly to see if they adequately cover the concerns raised.

The general consensus was that, while some common-sense principles should guide class invitations, a specific policy may not be necessary. Instead, a better understanding of current policies and their implications was deemed essential.

The situation described in the meeting had already gone through the department's review process, and the guests have ceased attending.

D. Accommodations & ADA Questions. T. Fawcett raised concerns about ADA accommodations and policies. The discussion focused on a particular situation in which a student requested class transcriptions due to a short-term issue, and the concern was that granting such accommodations might establish a campus-wide policy.

TF expressed the need for a policy that ensures individual accommodations offered by professors do not automatically create institutional or campus-wide mandates. The example cited was a student who, after receiving a specific accommodation from one professor, expected the same treatment from all professors, even if the student did not qualify for ADA accommodations.

The discussion involved clarifying the legal aspects of accommodations, exemptions, and the responsibilities of professors. It was emphasized that accommodations should be determined on a case-by-case basis, considering the specific needs of the student and the nature of the class.

Provost Austin highlighted the distinction between exemptions and accommodations, explaining that an exemption means a certain work requirement is waived, while an accommodation means the same work requirement should be performed differently. The concern raised was that granting accommodations could lead to expectations of uniform treatment from all professors.

The conclusion of the discussion was that T. Fawcett should continue exploring the matter and potentially have a conversation with Provost Austin, to clarify the college's stance on this issue. It was acknowledged as an important topic affecting all faculty members and the guidance provided by the ADA office.

V. Senate Discussions

A. Faculty Composition on the College Council. M. Gowans reported on the recent discussions with the Deans Council and Faculty Association regarding the five-member faculty representation on a reshuffled College Council. He reported that at this stage there has been no consensus. He presented the options discussed in the previous Senate meeting for the “fifth seat” on the Council, i.e. having a dean member, an adjunct member, an additional seat, a faculty-wide “democratic” vote, or polling the faculty.

M. Gowans felt that the majority of attendees agreed that the fifth member of the College Council should be a dean, as it was seen as the right mix of

representation. Concerns had also been raised about seeking faculty input on this decision, with some feeling that it might create unnecessary complexity.

He clarified that this decision did not come directly from the college president but was rather the result of discussions among Deans, Faculty Senate, and Faculty Association. He further discussed the evolving role of the College Council, with an emphasis on it being more advisory and focused on facilitating communication among different areas of the institution.

Faculty expressed the need for accountability, with suggestions that College Council members should reach out to their constituents and actively gather feedback. The issue of adjunct faculty representation and voting rights was raised, with some advocating for increased involvement and voting rights for adjuncts.

Overall, the discussion highlighted the complexities of determining the composition of the College Council and the importance of ensuring effective communication and representation within the faculty community.

B. Academic Integrity Policy

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

The subcommittee has been tasked to propose recommendations to changes in the Academic Integrity Policy regarding student use of generative A.I.

Regarding potential policy changes, senators discussed whether the default stance of A.I. use should be “prohibited unless allowed” or “allowed unless prohibited.” Senators seemed to express a preference for the “allowed unless prohibited” approach, as it aligns with the common practice of assuming something is permissible until explicitly forbidden. This approach was seen as less restrictive and more conducive to faculty innovation.

Additionally, the need for clarity in defining what constitutes “generative artificial intelligence” was acknowledged during the discussion. The committee responsible for this policy was given an additional two weeks to gather insights and recommendations from their respective departments and divisions before reaching a decision.

C. Senate Goals for 23-24 Academic Year. Senators emphasized the importance of listing the goals that have already been set in motion. These goals include focusing on recruitment and retention efforts, enhancing adjunct representation and exploring options to expand adjunct senator pay. The establishment of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee was also noted, recognizing its significance in maintaining ethical research practices. Additionally, the Senate expressed its commitment to serving the institution and continuing its efforts in outreach activities to engage with the university community and promote effective communication.

VI. Adjournment

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

Approval: unanimous of all present

The Senate adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 25** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes taken by Jacob L. Thomas

Minutes approved November 8, 2023