



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

Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2023

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

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

Senators Present: Matthew Gowans (Pres), Jed Rasmussen (VP), Karen Carter, Alan Christensen, Trent Fawcett, Wes Jamison, Adam Larsen, Dennis Schugk, Kellyanne Ure,* Jeff Wallace, McKay West,* Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Sandra Cox (sub: M. West), Rachel Keller (sub: K. Ure)

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Michael Austin (Provost), Mike Brenchley (Deans)

II. Minutes from Previous Meeting

A. Review of minutes from November 8, 2023

A. Larsen proposed changes to the draft minutes in two sections for clarification.

Motion to Approve: A. Larsen; **2nd:** W. Jamison

Approval of minutes with amendments: unanimous of all senators present

III. Informational Items & General Questions

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

1. College Council Representation. The Senate bylaws need to be amended to reflect recent changes in the composition of faculty representation on the College Council. The proposed revision was drafted by M. Gowans, with highlighted suggestions from J. Thomas.

Senate Bylaws 4.4 Text (Current Version): College Council Representative Selection: The College Council has tasked the Faculty Senate with selecting five voting members of the College Council. The Senate ensures that the College Council has faculty representation from both campuses. The Faculty Senate President and the Faculty Association President shall serve as voting members of the College Council. The Faculty Senate shall define the process and select three at-large College Council voting members from full-time Snow College faculty members on a rotating three-year schedule.

Proposed Revision: College Council Representative Selection: The College Council consists of representatives from faculty, staff, and students. The faculty composition includes the following voting members: Faculty Senate President; Faculty Association President; a dean; and two at-large, full-time faculty members. If the Senate President and/or Association President are unable to attend a meeting, another member of their respective committee will attend in their place. The College Council has tasked the Faculty Senate with selecting the two at-large faculty representatives on the committee. One at-large representative will [shall?] be from the Ephraim campus and the other from Richfield. The at-large positions are selected on a two-year rotating schedule. The Faculty Senate will hold campus-wide elections for the at-large position each Spring to begin the following academic year.

During the meeting, M. Gowans presented changes to the Senate bylaws related to faculty representation on the College Council. H. Withers raised concerns about the lack of a faculty representative for adjuncts and proposed assigning an at-large faculty member for this role. The aim was to ensure explicit advocacy for adjuncts on the College Council. M. Gowans supported this suggestion. W. Jamison expressed agreement, highlighting the need to define the role clearly.

M. Gowans emphasized that all faculty representatives were expected to fulfill this responsibility, not just the at-large College Council representatives. A. Larsen recommended further discussion with H. Withers on this matter. M. Gowans proposed adding a sentence specifying that at-large positions, among their other duties, include the responsibility to consider adjunct voices.

Motion: M. West; **2nd:** A. Christensen

Approval: unanimous of all senators present

B. Updates from the Provost & Deans Council

Academic Programs at the Gunnison Prison. Senators discussed reopening education programs at the Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison. Provost Austin shared plans to tour the prison in Gunnison on Dec. 8 with other administrators. Currently, there are career and tech ed certification programs offered at the prison but no academic programs. The Provost proposed utilizing the "Second-Chance Pell" grant to offer associate degrees, a move supported by USHE. Instead of USHE delegating this role to Salt Lake Community College, which serves the other state correctional facility, Provost Austin with Associate Provost D. Allred's assistance will be initiating the application process for a Prison Education Program to accept federal prison funding. This program would include hybrid, face-to-face, and online classes. Any approval process would take 18 months.

A. Larsen recalled the program's past success in the late 1990s and 2000s, questioning the reason for discontinuation. Provost Austin explained this was due to a state legislative stance in 2011 against prisoners receiving benefits. D. Schugk, who formerly oversaw academic programs at the prison, added that complaints and funding issues also contributed to the cessation. The Provost emphasized the need for a renewed focus on prison education given the high offender recidivism rate.

W. Jamison raised concerns about logistics, questioning the impact on faculty load and enrollment. Provost Austin assured that safety considerations were a priority and that load adjustments would be made. The Provost further discussed SLCC's model, mentioning potential collaborations and the possibility of state funds to support the initiative.

T. Fawcett expressed concerns about safety and staff education, citing previous incidents of concern. Provost Austin acknowledged these, highlighting the choice faculty would have in participating. M. West questioned potential pressure on faculty if teaching at the prison were to be advertised. The Provost assured that no one would be forced to engage in prison education programs, emphasizing faculty buy-in and careful planning.

Other Items. Provost Austin also addressed stipend allocation concerns, aiming for a fair and rational distribution. The discussion concluded with MA addressing confusion about sabbatical funding, stating that it varies based on individual circumstances.

C. Institutional Review Board (J. Rasmussen)

J. Rasmussen emphasized the need to promptly form an ad hoc to address the vacant position left in Institutional Review by Assistant Provost Lindsay Chaney's resignation. M. Gowans sought input on immediate actions, referencing the previous meeting's discussion on the Board's composition. J. Rasmussen suggested forming a Senate subcommittee to expedite the process. The ad hoc committee, composed of Senate members, would gather necessary documentation and present it to the Senate for decisions on standing committee formation and member selection.

Provost Austin supported the swift creation of the IRB ad hoc committee, noting the redirection of funds from the vacant Assistant Provost position to a similar role. M. Gowans called for volunteers for the subcommittee, expressing the goal of having it in place by early spring and functional before the end of the spring term. Feedback on the committee's progress was expected by the first meeting after Christmas break.

J. Rasmussen disclosed his potential withdrawal from the Senate next semester due to becoming Co-Chair of the Biology Department. T. Fawcett volunteered to replace him on the ad hoc committee, considering the significance of science division representation when it comes to institutional review. M. West expressed interest in contributing to the effort despite filling in as a senator for S. Cox.

The volunteers for the IRB ad hoc subcommittee are **T. Fawcett** (co-chair), **W. Jamison** (co-chair), and **M. West** with **J. Rasmussen** in an advisory role.

M. Gowans again clarified that the committee would be ad hoc, aiming to initiate the process and later transition to an established committee. The members were encouraged not to stress about the task during Christmas break.

D. Accommodations & ADA Questions (T. Fawcett)

T. Fawcett provided an update on discussions with the ADA Office, mentioning that the matter is still pending due to Director Paula Robison's impending retirement. He shared his efforts researching policies from other schools to find guidance on what professors should do in the short-term to accommodate temporary disabilities, and conveyed the challenge of finding a clear answer on this matter. Specifically, he questioned whether providing an individual exception for a class necessarily constitutes an accommodation on behalf of the entire college.

M. Gowans responded, emphasizing the key question of whether faculty members can offer a service for one student that they are not willing to provide for the entire class. He acknowledged that the term "accommodation" allows for such flexibility, but there was uncertainty about whether instructors have the freedom to make such distinctions.

T. Fawcett expressed gratitude for the reasonableness of students in this matter, noting that many are often more understanding than they are given credit for.

IV. Senate Discussions

A. Academic Integrity Policy

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

M. Gowans reported on the distribution of the policy to the Curriculum (CC) and Academic Standards (AS) committees. AS is still formulating its response. Adam Teichert, chair of the CC, raised concerns aligned with the previous discussion about the initial policy placing the responsibility on students, but in the new draft, the burden has been shifted onto professors.

A. Larsen highlighted that departments could also establish policies, emphasizing the need for professors to include relevant information in their syllabi and engage in conversations about AI usage. T. Fawcett expressed concerns about the impact on teaching methods, and M. Gowans acknowledged challenges with the reliability of plagiarism checkers.

M. Gowans underscored the importance of both using and teaching AI, as well as the need for senators to engage in a conversation with the CC. T. Fawcett volunteered to meet with the CC members along with other senators at the upcoming CC meeting on December 4. M. Gowans stressed the necessity for faculty to understand and control AI's use, emphasizing the importance of explaining, not defending, this position to the CC.

K. Ure voiced concerns about potential confusion among students regarding different standards across departments. M. Gowans suggested that a departmental-level conversation might be necessary, and T. Fawcett supported the idea of perhaps a department like English creating its own policy.

The conversation touched on the students' perception of value in learning and the potential harm of restricting AI usage. D. Schugk proposed educating professors on the varied applications of AI, and M. West highlighted the challenge of creating a policy that satisfies diverse perspectives. M. West advocated for a policy that grants freedom while addressing potential issues with a small minority. Provost Austin drew parallels with past challenges when internet research was introduced, expressing the need for a reasonable policy outlining faculty responsibilities and student considerations.

A. Larsen shared the art world's experience in adapting to technological advancements and emphasized the importance of addressing the problem-solving aspect behind the technology. The evolving nature of AI necessitates a flexible policy. A. Christensen noted the need for clarity even if the policy evolves. M. Gowans acknowledged the existing responsibility on professors and T. Fawcett concluded that the policy establishes clear parameters. The discussion ended with the recognition that the policy might need adjustments in the future, but having a policy in place is an improvement over having none.

B. Senate Goals for 23-24 Academic Year

M. Gowans revisited discussions on goals for the academic year, including achieving greater unity, outreach to the Richfield campus, addressing adjunct concerns, and improving adjunct pay. R. Keller was tasked with noting potential challenging areas for updating definitions and revising the student appeals process related to Academic Integrity policy and Academic Standards. Senators agreed that developing an IRB in the spring is imperative, as well as ways that the Senate could contribute to enrollment and retention goals.

Senate Committees. M. Gowans emphasized unity between Senate and Senate committees, proposing a gathering in the spring, potentially a hot cocoa night. Faculty outreach ideas were discussed, including Lunch Bunch, but concerns were raised about its effectiveness. Senators further suggested bringing up the A.I. discussion in a larger dialogue on Assessment Day or during the Fall Assembly.

Supporting Adjuncts. Supporting adjuncts was also highlighted, with discussions about onboarding, faculty training, the possibility of an adjunct handbook, departmental mentorships, and a Canvas page for adjuncts. Senators agreed to explore these actionable items and collaborate with relevant parties to address the identified concerns.

Student Food Security. W. Jamison discussed efforts by his committee to combat student hunger, specifically addressing the need for extended hours at Buster's Pantry. Concerns were raised about the lack of cooking facilities in the Suites, affecting students, particularly those from other countries, during school breaks and the summer. The issue of students relying on the Maverik convenience store for food during late hours was also noted. Senators suggested expanding the availability of existing services and exploring further options like food trucks or imitating SUU's twice-monthly bread and soup night. This part of the conversation concluded with plans to address these issues at higher levels and explore long-term solutions, such as a community kitchen.

C. DEI Letter of Support to USHE

M. Gowans drafted a letter in support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives to the Utah Board of Higher Education. Senators discussed how to proceed with the letter before the next legislative term beginning in January.

M. Gowans expressed concerns about potential disagreements on political grounds. While emphasizing the shared value of having a diverse campus population, he acknowledged that the use of “DEI” (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) language in the letter may be contentious. A proposal was made to define the terms to avoid misinterpretation and ensure clarity. Senators raised a variety of perspectives on the letter, some expressing that the letter should stand as written while others believed it should be let to “breathe” for a time.

The ethical considerations of faculty involvement in the discussion were raised, and A. Christensen highlighted his opinion for more thorough deliberation before any decision is made. A. Larsen emphasized the importance of addressing the issue openly rather than avoiding it. T. Fawcett proposed a more extensive conversation in the future to explore the meanings of the words in question. J. Wallace agreed to forward a response email he had written along with additional opinions from a few faculty members.

V. Adjournment

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

Approval: unanimous of all senators present

The Senate adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **January 24, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes taken by Jacob L. Thomas
Minutes approved January 24, 2024