

## Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2024 @ 3:30pm

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### I. Call to Order & Welcome

The Senate was called to order at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

**Senators Present:** Matthew Gowans (President), Sandra Cox (Vice-President), Alan Christensen, Trent Fawcett, Steve Hart, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Dennis Schugk, Anita Slusser, Hilary Withers

**Senators Absent:** Karen Carter

**Guests:** Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Stacey McIff (College President), Lisa Laird (Staff Assoc President), Mike Brenchley (Deans), David Allred (Assoc Provost)

**Special Recognition:** Congratulations to **Sandra Cox**, who is the new Senate Vice-President and will assume her duties as Senate President on July 1.

Congratulations to **Trent Fawcett**, who has been elected to serve as Senate Vice-President for the 2024-2025 school year. He will begin his duties on July 1.

We extend special thanks to **Jed Rasmussen** for his four years of dedicated service on the Senate, including three terms as Vice-President. We wish him well in his new responsibilities in the Biology Department.

Welcome to **Steve Hart**, who has been elected by the Natural Science & Mathematics Division to fill-out the remainder of Jed Rasmussen's Senate term (2024-2026).

## II. Meeting Minutes

The Senate reviewed the minutes from the January 24, 2024 meeting.

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

**Approval:** Unanimous of senators present.

## III. Informational Items

### A. Senate & Senate-Administered Elections

<b>Faculty Senate President ✓</b>	completed winner: Sandra Cox
<b>Faculty Senate Vice-President ✓</b>	completed Winner: Trent Fawcett
<b>College Council – Richfield seat</b>	accepting nominations after Spring Break Chad Price eligible for reelection
<b>GE Committee – Ephraim seat</b>	accepting nominations after Spring Break John Van Orman eligible for reelection
<b>GE Committee – Richfield seat</b>	accepting nominations after Spring Break Ryan Thalman ineligible for reelection
<b>Senator – Humanities</b>	division will hold elections this semester Matthew Gowans ineligible for reelection
<b>Senator – Science &amp; Math ✓</b> (by-election)	completed winner: Steve Hart
<b>Senator – Social Science</b>	division will hold elections this semester Dennis Schugk eligible for reelection

**B. Library Committee Assignment.** Due to J. Rasmussen’s departure, the Senate no longer has a sitting member on the Library Committee. S. Hart is willing to serve on the Library Committee if its meeting times accord with his schedule.

**C. Updates from the Staff Association (Lisa Laird).** Lisa Laird, President of the Staff Association, expressed the association's aim to enhance unity among campus employees. They plan to organize more activities with faculty, including a luncheon at West Campus on Monday, February 26 at 1:30 pm. President McIff will also attend. The visit will include getting to know other departments through a progressive hors d'oeuvres session in order for main Ephraim campus faculty and staff to mingle with their colleagues on West Campus. All faculty are encouraged to attend.

**D. Updates from the College President.** President Stacey McIff provided updates during the Senate meeting regarding the administration's plans for the upcoming Fall semester. These plans include the introduction of five new associate degrees aimed at certificate-stacking, focusing on areas such as health science, transportation, and industrial manufacturing. The goal is to meet the diverse needs of students, including those transferring from technical colleges, and to ensure accessibility through online options.

Efforts are underway to secure funding for facilities, notably the Social Science building in Ephraim, through ongoing discussions with legislators. Additionally, the college has been awarded a lease for the Co-Op building on Main Street by Ephraim City, which will serve as a venue for showcasing the college and hosting events. Expansion of the athletics program, including the addition of a JV football team, is also planned to attract new students.

President McIff reiterated the institution's commitment to technical education and community engagement. Plans for the Richfield campus involve aligning course offerings with local needs and enhancing technical programs to excel statewide. Efforts to enhance student life on that campus include leasing additional apartment buildings and expanding athletic programs, which includes the addition of a cross country team. Renovation of the Washburn Building is also underway to create a more collegiate atmosphere.

Senators raised questions regarding commitment to the JV football program. Pres. McIff assured the Senate that the program will be assessed and adjusted as needed, and through institutional planning data, will not affect funding in other areas.

## **E. Updates from the Faculty Senate President.**

**1. College Council.** M. Gowans noted that there hasn't been a College Council meeting since the last one. He further noted that there hasn't been any communication from the state regarding Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) yet. He mentioned that typically such updates aren't received until the end of the legislative session. The college has an established procedure to assess and determine the extent of these increases.

**2. Deans Council.** During the most recent Deans Council, there was extensive discussion regarding faculty burnout, with concerns raised about the stressors currently affecting faculty members and potential solutions. Many faculty members also teach overload, which may contribute to these issues. Assoc. Provost David Allred is seeking suggestions for addressing these concerns.

R. Keller highlighted the challenges faced by her department chair, who was overwhelmed by the rollout of several new software programs. She recommended allowing time for faculty to learn the software before full implementation. S. Hart suggested that talking about burnout during the meeting might not be the most effective way to address it, and proposed instead more effective initiatives such as organizing book readings, sports activities like pickleball or basketball, and creating a meditation room. Additionally, R. Keller mentioned that water aerobics sessions have been a successful initiative among some female faculty members. The discussion emphasized the importance of finding activities outside of work to alleviate stress and foster a sense of community.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to pass on the discussed ideas to David Allred, with an emphasis on providing support for addressing faculty burnout. Participants acknowledged the importance of working in an institution that values employee well-being and expressed a desire for more frequent appreciation and recognition of faculty contributions. There was a shared sentiment of feeling undervalued at times, despite being passionate about their work and involved in community outreach efforts.

**3. Policy on Policies.** M. Gowans discussed his recent conversation with Paul Tew, who oversees the regular review process for policies. He highlighted the

importance of the Senate's awareness regarding policies related to academic freedom, even if they are not up for review. He expressed a desire for the Senate to support P. Tew in this challenging role, and offered assistance in identifying crucial policies for Senate involvement. The plan is for Senate leadership to collaborate with P. Tew when policies are due for review, potentially addressing some three policies per semester. This collaboration ensures faculty maintain ownership of pertinent issues as policies move through the review process and onto the College Council agenda.

Of particular interest was the policy regarding faculty transitions to and from administrative roles, which had not been approved by either Senate or College Council. M. Gowans emphasized the need for clarity regarding Senate-related policies and understanding the review process, aiming for alignment with P. Tew on these matters. They proposed working on formal wording changes for Policy 101, the overarching policy on policies, and planned to provide a red-lined copy for review at the next meeting.

A question was raised by A. Christensen regarding how to identify policies relevant to faculty prerogatives, to which M. Gowans suggested the need for a maintained list or assistance from the Senate Parliamentarian and whoever is fulfilling P. Tew's current duties in the future. Senators agreed on the necessity of establishing a clear procedure and plan moving forward with this.

**4. UCSFL.** The R470 GE document was included in the materials distributed to senators. Of most import is the necessity of trimming four credits from required General Education courses, and which required classes to cut as a result. The conversation on this issue was brief, though T. Fawcett mentioned that the GE Committee would soon distribute a survey to get feedback from faculty.

**5. Legislative Bills. HB438:** M. Gowans provided updates on this bill affecting the tenure review process at USHE institutions, noting that the proposed changes are relatively minimal but still significant for the institution. Although the changes have not yet been finalized, there has been discussion among legislators surrounding the tenure process. M. Gowans recently sent Julie Hartley, Associate Commissioner of Higher Education, information she requested about Snow's tenure process.

Currently, the institution conducts tenure reviews every three years, which aligns with the state's proposed adjustment from five years. Despite slight alterations in responsibilities for the president outlined in the proposed changes of the bill, the overall process remains largely unchanged at the institution. Tenure evaluations still proceed to the Provost and President before reaching the Board of Trustees for approval.

Additionally, M. Gowans drew attention to the policy regarding reduction in force due to financial exigencies, which could potentially affect tenured faculty. While such provisions are outlined in the proposed bill, they are not new to the institution's existing policy framework.

Pres. S. McIff then highlighted previous legislative discussions that had considered eliminating tenure altogether. The proposed adjustments represent a compromise, emphasizing the importance of tenure reviews, which again align with current practices at the institution.

**SB226:** The Senate also discussed a recent bill which proposed the establishment of a separate School of General Education at the University of Utah (U of U). This school would have its own tenure system and a prescribed curriculum focusing primarily on Western intellectual traditions.

R. Keller highlighted the growing trend of classical education in K-12, emphasizing its alignment with the proposed bill's focus on Western traditions. Concerns were raised about the likelihood of the proposal being approved, with T. Fawcett indicated the potential opposition from influential parties at the U.

M. Gowans noted that there was strong opposition to the proposal, describing it as prescriptive and treating college students as minors rather than adults. D. Allred added points about the bill's poor drafting and its potential negative impacts, including fiscal costs and disruption to existing GE frameworks across state institutions. The consensus among attendees was that the proposal could undermine previous efforts to align GE across the state and negatively impact students' critical and creative development.

In addition to concerns about implementation costs, there were apprehensions about the potential detrimental effects on other institutions if the proposal were

to proceed. The sentiment was that the proposal, if approved at the U of U, could set a precedent for similar changes in other USHE schools, potentially causing significant harm to institutions like Snow College and Salt Lake Community College (SLCC).

## IV. Senate Initiatives

- A. Supporting Adjunct Faculty.** M. Gowans expressed strong commitment to addressing the support needs of adjunct faculty members, and proposed a subcommittee to continue the conversation and develop actionable proposals. D. Allred, who is already involved in adjunct support initiatives, expressed willingness to contribute to this effort.

**Motion:** That the Adjunct Faculty Support subcommittee be formed, with H. Withers as chair, and A. Slusser and W. Jamison as members.

**Made By:** H. Withers; **2nd:** S. Cox

**Approval:** unanimous by all senators present.

- B. Academic Integrity Policy—Artificial Intelligence Integration Subcommittee**  
T. Fawcett (de facto chair), A. Larsen, W. Jamison, and J. Wallace (sabbatical)

The subcommittee has proposed the following language for the use of generative AI in relation to academic integrity:

**2.4.6** The use of generative AI when it has been prohibited in an assignment or in the course at large.

T. Fawcett reported that this change in policy language has the support of the Curriculum Committee, General Education Committee, and other stakeholders. He then made the following motion.

**Motion:** That the change in language for Academic Integrity Policy 2.4.6 be approved by the faculty Senate (as written above) and forwarded to the College Council.

**Made By:** T. Fawcett; **2nd:** W. Jamison

**Approval:** unanimous by all senators present.

Senators further discussed the use of AI in the fine arts disciplines and the degree to which it can be used as a tool. A. Larsen shared insights on the prevalence of vector illustrations readily available online and the challenges they pose, particularly in generating content. T. Fawcett emphasized the importance of addressing this issue in syllabi. M. Gowans highlighted the need for a flexible policy that allows for interpretation by the Academic Standards Committee and professors.

The senators deliberated on whether the matter should undergo a 30-day review by the College Council. A. Larsen suggested that a national discussion on the topic might provide valuable insights. Concerns were raised about the urgency of addressing the issue, considering the current challenges faced by faculty. M. Gowans emphasized the importance of transparency and soliciting input from faculty members. Senators agreed that the issue would be brought to the College Council by M. Gowans for review at the next meeting to ensure faculty involvement and support.

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

T. Fawcett (co-chair), W. Jamison (co-chair), McKay West (non-senator, advisory); Jed Rasmussen (non-senator, advisory)

T. Fawcett presented a preliminary draft of a policy outline concerning the Institutional Review Board (IRB). He raised several questions for consideration, including the role of the IRB in protecting the college's name as well as whom the committee would be composed of. To these questions, T. Fawcett proposed the committee have representation from various faculty and staff members to ensure diversity and expertise. Senators discussed the committee's responsibilities, including whether it should oversee incentives offered to participants in research projects.

A. Christensen and M. Gowans emphasized the importance of not duplicating existing policies and ensuring that the committee's role aligns with established standards for research ethics. W. Jamison provided examples of the IRB's function at other institutions, highlighting the need to balance student research activities with ethical considerations.



The conversation also touched upon the frequency of IRB meetings and the potential need for subcommittees to handle specific tasks. T. Fawcett proposed streamlining the review process through online training for researchers and expedited review procedures for certain projects. Concerns were raised about the involvement of smaller divisions on the IRB and the need for flexibility in committee composition. M. Gowans suggested gathering input from the divisions regarding the committee's structure and function.

#### **D. Academic Standards Revision Subcommittee**

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

Tabled for a future meeting.

#### **E. Understanding Academic Freedom**

Discussions from Reichmann, *Understanding Academic Freedom*

Tabled for a future meeting.

### **V. Adjournment**

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

**Approval:** Unanimous by all senators present.

The Senate adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **February 28, 2024** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

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**Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas**

**Approved:** February 28, 2024