Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2024 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Meeting Minutes

The Senate was called to order at 3:32 p.m.

Senators Present: Sandra Cox (Pres), Trent Fawcett (VP), 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), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Kristi Stevens (Assoc Provost)

Minutes from 10/23
Motion to Approve: S. Hart; **2nd:** A. Larsen
Approval: unanimous of all senators present

II. Senate Calendar

A. Fall 2024 Final Meetings
Since the next scheduled meeting was the day before Thanksgiving and the final meeting of the semester during Finals Week, the Senate decided that this would be the final Senate meeting for Fall 2024. Pres. McIff has asked to address the Senate before the end of the semester, so the Senate agreed for accommodations to be made for a videoconference with the president soon. (Note: The meeting was held December 4. See the Addendum below for a summary.)

III. Senate Business

Senators received updates from the following committees.

A. Deans Council Report

S. Cox, representing the Senate to the Deans Council
M. Brenchley, representing the Deans Council to the Senate

1. Cross-Listing and Tuition Discrepancies. Concerns were raised regarding the cross-listing of courses (e.g., COMM courses cross-listed with BUS courses), particularly around differing tuition rates and the financial burden on students. Tech Ed courses, which are priced at $85 per credit hour, often have higher costs than undergraduate courses. This disparity can cause students to pay significantly more for certain cross-listed courses, such as welding. Cross-listing complicates financial equity, articulation agreements, and accurate reporting for Institutional Research (IR). Courses like Tai Chi, offered under multiple prefixes (e.g., as both a dance and exercise science course), further obscure IR data and instructor workload.

The Provost plans to meet with USHE to clarify rules regarding articulation agreements and course prefixes. Prefixes impact articulation at other institutions, with some relying heavily on prefixes for advising and credit transfers. The Senate discussed the need for greater uniformity and clarity, particularly for Tech Ed courses, which are governed by different statewide financial rules. A suggestion was made to introduce a digital system or identifier to track cross-listed courses and streamline data collection.

Similarly, the numbering and scheduling of IVC (interactive video conferencing) courses are causing inconsistencies. Cross-listed and IVC courses can make it appear that instructors are teaching far more sections than they are. Suggestions were made to simplify tracking and reporting, such as using a shared identifier for cross-listed courses or making adjustments to course prefixes to better reflect delivery methods.

2. Post-Tenure Review. Discussion included the post-tenure review process and a request from Deans for a redlined version of any changes proposed by the Appointment and Tenure (A&T) Committee, especially regarding five-year reviews. There was some confusion about whether the A&T Committee is making changes to the five-year review policy. While some Deans indicated

changes were forthcoming, Senate members expressed a desire to review and understand any updates in detail.

3. Financial Allocations. S. Cox reported that the College Council discussed faculty concerns regarding financial allocations, particularly the funding of new buildings despite ongoing challenges with faculty compensation. Administration representatives presented a slide outlining fund allocations and clarified that certain funds are legally restricted to specific purposes, making them unavailable for redistribution. They emphasized that all financial resources are fully allocated and that there are no unused reserves for alternative use. The Senate plans to invite a representative next semester to provide additional clarification on financial matters.

4. Shared Governance & Leadership Roles. Senators discussed the challenges of encouraging faculty to take on leadership roles, noting concerns about the potential decline of shared governance if these positions remain unfilled. Members proposed non-monetary incentives, such as awards and thank-you gestures, to foster engagement. W. Jamison questioned hypothetically whether hiring professional deans (which is not currently on the table) would be more costly than increasing stipends for faculty deans, while A. Larsen argued that increasing compensation for faculty deans by 25% would be a more cost-effective solution. A. Larsen also highlighted the need for additional release time to allow deans to effectively support their divisions without taking on overloads.

The discussion included whether serving as a chair or dean was considered part of faculty obligations under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). It was clarified as "service to the institution," distinct from general committee assignments. S. Hart raised concerns about the ongoing challenge of recruiting faculty for roles such as program directors and committee chairs, attributing this partly to lingering mistrust between Academic Affairs and faculty. He noted that while the situation had improved, it remained a sensitive issue. M. Brenchley cautioned against assuming faculty sentiment was unanimous and emphasized balanced representation in discussions.

K. Stevens mentioned that Provost Austin strongly supports shared governance and faculty-driven decision-making but expressed frustration with low faculty participation in committees. The Provost's perspective was not punitive but aimed at understanding barriers to participation. From the adjunct faculty

perspective, H. Withers pointed to stagnant adjunct pay as a significant obstacle to engagement, questioning why funds could increase headcount but not wages.

R. Keller highlighted that leadership roles often involve dealing with difficult behavior, which may deter potential candidates. S. Cox noted that the College Council was developing additional training for new chairs and deans to ease transitions into leadership roles. Senators agreed that improved training and a more supportive environment could help make these positions more appealing, and they planned to revisit this topic in future discussions.

B. Curriculum Committee: Master Syllabi Revisions
T. Fawcett, Senate representative to the Curriculum Committee

The Senate revisited recent changes to the handling of master syllabi, which were approved to allow Academic Affairs to make wording updates. Backup files of the original syllabi are maintained to address concerns over significant changes. Adam Teichert, Curriculum Chair, has contributed substantial effort to these updates, which include streamlining requirements for fields on syllabi. Many responsibilities will now shift to department chairs as the college transitions to the Simple Syllabus platform.

The Curriculum Committee plans to implement a new annual calendar for syllabi renewal. Instead of updating syllabi on a semester-by-semester basis, all syllabi expiring in a given academic year will be addressed together. A comprehensive list will be distributed in August, giving departments a full year to work through updates. While this shift may initially seem overwhelming due to the longer list, it aims to reduce last-minute deadlines and improve efficiency. Members noted that the one-page syllabi format, introduced as part of this process, should help mitigate procrastination and simplify updates. Specific annual system deadlines have not yet been finalized.

C. Calendaring Committee
S. Hart, Senate representative to the Calendaring Committee

S. Hart reported that the Calendaring Committee met to address proposed changes aimed at improving the academic calendar and enhancing the orientation experience. The meeting focused on fall semester adjustments, including a vote on three calendar options. The majority supported starting the

semester a week earlier, with two days dedicated to orientation followed by a three-day instruction week. To accommodate this shift, adjustments were made by redistributing three instructional days:

- The final class day on Monday of finals week was eliminated, which also removed the 7 a.m. finals window.
- A Monday off was added following Fall Break.
- A Friday break in September was introduced.

These changes maintain the required 70 instructional days while balancing the calendar to distribute instructional days more evenly across the week. Mondays, which were harder hit, received additional attention. Though not all preferences could be accommodated, this compromise provides longer breaks and preserves instructional integrity.

Concerns were raised about the impact of these adjustments. Some senators noted the changes effectively added a workweek to the semester. The committee acknowledged differing opinions on the calendar, including a mix of desires for longer breaks, more instruction days, and adjustments to the timing of Fall Break.

While some participants expressed concerns about the process and low participation—only seven individuals attended the meeting, though more were invited—others highlighted the progress made and were willing to continue refining the calendar in future discussions. The Spring 2026 calendaring session remains to be scheduled. Overall, the committee recognized the challenge of creating a calendar that satisfies all stakeholders while addressing competing priorities.

D. Stipends & Course Releases Ad Hoc Committee
T. Fawcett and D. Schugk, ad hoc committee members

The last two weeks of meetings were canceled due to scheduling conflicts. No significant updates reported.

E. Academic Integrity Policy Update Subcommittee
R. Keller (chair) and A. Christensen

R. Keller reported progress on updating the bylaws. Minor adjustments were made, and the revised bylaws will soon be sent to J. Thomas, who will distribute

them to all senators for review. The landing page for the policy is nearly complete, but the updated form is still pending. The old form, which routes to Mike Daniels, Dean of Students, remains in use for now. R. Keller expressed optimism about the project's completion, and senators thanked her for her work.

F. Institutional Review Board Development Subcommittee
W. Jamison (interim chair), Tony Smith (chair-elect)

The Institutional Review Board Development Subcommittee announced changes in leadership following a blind vote. Tony Smith was elected the new chair, replacing W. Jamison. T. Smith will now serve as both the Senate representative and chair of this committee. W. Jamison also reported progress on the redlined bylaws, which have been reviewed by the committee and are ready for legal review. The group discussed the process for finalizing the bylaws, agreeing that the Senate should first review them before being sent to USHE's legal team. Members acknowledged the possibility of further changes during the legal review and agreed to revisit the bylaws if necessary. This collaborative approach aims to ensure thorough vetting before final approval.

G. Supporting Adjunct Faculty Subcommittee
H. Withers (chair) and W. Jamison

The subcommittee reported no new developments. They are awaiting progress on a Canvas course being created by Justin Thorpe for adjunct onboarding. Additionally, they are still gathering information on potential meeting times for adjunct faculty, though any gatherings will not occur until next semester.

IV. Senate Initiatives

A. Improving Leadership Training

The Senate engaged in an extensive discussion about improving leadership training and support for faculty members in administrative roles. The conversation stemmed from a suggestion by Kellyanne Ure, Chair of the Department of English and Philosophy, emphasizing the lack of onboarding for faculty chairs and committee members. Faculty are often handed responsibilities without sufficient guidance, leading to inefficiency and frustration.

Senators noted that prior training programs, such as a Leadership Academy, had been effective and could serve as a model. There was a general consensus on the need for regular, structured training sessions covering both leadership skills and technical responsibilities. Examples included conflict management, productive meeting facilitation, and tools like Argos and CourseLeaf.

1. **Training Format**

   Senators considered several potential formats for these trainings:

   a. Regular Leadership Training: Monthly sessions focusing on specific topics, such as supervisory skills, technology use, or managing faculty workloads.

   b. Shadowing Opportunities: Allowing incoming chairs to observe current chairs to gain insight into responsibilities. However, some members expressed concern that shadowing alone might perpetuate inefficient practices.

   c. Streamlined Meetings: Incorporating training into existing Deans and Chairs meetings, potentially dedicating half the time to training and half to business. This approach would reduce the need for additional meetings and ensure consistent participation.

   d. Targeted Training for Committees: Developing specialized sessions for Senate committees, tailored to their specific functions and tools.

2. **Equity Among Dept. Chairs**

   The conversation also touched on equity among department chairs, noting that responsibilities vary widely based on department size and composition. Members discussed the possibility of restructuring departments to balance workloads, though concerns were raised about potential conflicts if disciplines were merged inappropriately.

3. **Responsibility**

   There was agreement that both the Senate and Academic Affairs should share responsibility for organizing and funding training initiatives. Suggestions included having Senate committees oversee relevant training while Academic Affairs handles broader administrative training. The importance of clear priorities and avoiding burnout was emphasized, with a commitment to ensuring training is meaningful and effective.

The discussion concluded with plans to revisit the topic during the December 4 calendar meeting, where specific plans for implementing training programs will be developed.

B. Simple Syllabus (Assoc. Provost Stevens)

Associate Provost Kristi Stevens led a discussion on the implementation of Simple Syllabus, a new platform designed to meet legislative requirements mandating that particular portions of all syllabi be posted publicly online. The rollout is scheduled for the spring semester, with the final training session on November 25 from 1-2 p.m. This session will be recorded, and a brief three-minute training video will also be available. The system is still in beta testing, allowing issues to be addressed before full implementation.

The platform uses a template designed to balance compliance with flexibility. Required fields will be clearly marked and must be completed, while optional fields can be left blank. Public-facing content, required by law, will be visible to all, while private-facing content (e.g., contact information and class times) will be accessible only to enrolled students. The design minimizes potential conflicts with academic freedom, and departments may still set their own specific requirements.

To simplify compliance, policies will be linked to their online sources instead of requiring full-text inclusion in syllabi. Templates will include pre-populated content, and users can drag-and-drop sections to customize the layout. Chairs and deans will have the ability to view all syllabi to ensure compliance, reducing oversight burdens.

K. Stevens emphasized that all faculty, including adjuncts and concurrent enrollment instructors must use the platform. Faculty who are unfamiliar with Canvas must begin using it, even if only to submit their syllabus. This mandate will be enforced starting January 8, 2025, with general education courses being a priority. Non-compliance risks a potential financial penalty of 10% of the college's operating budget, as determined by state law.

The Senate discussed potential challenges, such as the learning curve for older adjuncts and instructors not accustomed to Canvas. Stevens noted that training materials, including guides and templates, would help ease this transition. Faculty are encouraged to reach out to deans, chairs, or division representatives

for additional support. Provost Austin plans to issue a statement reinforcing the mandate to ensure widespread compliance. Senators were asked to communicate the importance of this initiative to their divisions and support its successful implementation.

V. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: T. Fawcett; **2nd:** H. Withers
Approval: unanimous of all senators present

The Senate adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 22, 2025 from 3:30-5:00 p.m.** in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

ADDENDUM: Remarks from President McIff
conducted over Microsoft Teams, December 4, 2024, 4:30 PM

Notes by Jacob Thomas, Senate Parliamentarian
Senators Present: Sandra Cox (Pres.), Trent Fawcett (VP), Karen Carter, Alan Christensen, Steve Hart, Wes Jamison, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Charley Roetting, Dennis Schugk, Tony Smith
Senators Absent: Jeff Wallace, Hilary Withers
Others: Stacee McIff, College President; Mike Brenchley, Dean of Social Science

President McIff addressed recent developments affecting Snow College and Utah's higher education landscape, focusing on statewide expectations, legislative audits, workforce alignment, and institutional priorities.

A. **Legislative Audit (November 2024)**
A legislative audit examined USHE's system collaboration, efficiency, and workforce alignment, seeking ways to remain competitive and define institutional roles. Recommendations included:

- Developing long-term, 20-year plans for each institution.
- Evaluating programs based on return on investment (ROI), employment outcomes, and operational efficiency.

- Reducing or discontinuing underperforming programs to maximize resources, as authorized by recent legislation.

Pres. McIff emphasized the importance of Snow College proactively setting internal metrics for program evaluation—focusing on cost, transferability, and employment outcomes—rather than adopting external measures that may not reflect the college's unique mission. She highlighted challenges such as comparing Snow's programs to four-year universities and ensuring metrics account for Snow's role in preparing students for further education.

B. Cicero Workforce Alignment Study

Pres. McIff reported on this study, which prioritized:

- Enhancing "durable skills" (e.g., teamwork, communication, punctuality), which Snow College already teaches.
- Increasing work-based learning opportunities and strengthening industry connections.
- Responding quickly to evolving industry technical skill needs to ensure graduates remain competitive.

Pres. McIff stressed the importance of demonstrating Snow's effectiveness in these areas while adapting to industry demands.

C. Trustees Statewide Training

Key takeaways from recent statewide training for boards of trustees included:

- Emphasis on program reviews, focusing on transferability, workforce alignment, wage outcomes, and completion rates.
- Increased scrutiny on new programs during approval processes to ensure they meet efficiency and cost-saving goals.
- Improved space utilization and the adoption of an "incubator model" for program development to facilitate easier termination of underperforming programs.

D. Legislative Priorities for Snow College (2025)

Pres. McIff outlined priorities and recent achievements:

- Continued funding for capital projects, including refreshing the Washburn Building and completing the Social Science Building.

- Performance funding based on metrics such as access, completion, and high-yield degrees. Snow College exceeded its five-year goal for academic completion and is performing well compared to other institutions, with opportunities to earn additional funding.

E. Closing Remarks

President McIff reaffirmed Snow's commitment to setting internal goals to avoid mandated program cuts or restructuring. She highlighted the institution's proactive measures, such as reallocating resources and establishing systems for efficiency, as opportunities to lead within the state's higher education framework. Snow College's focus on maintaining its mission, while aligning with statewide expectations, positions it well to navigate current challenges and leverage upcoming opportunities.

Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas
Approved: January 22, 2025