

Meeting Minutes

February 26, 2025 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Meeting Minutes

A. The Senate was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Senators Present: Sandra Cox (Pres), Trent Fawcett (VP), Karen Carter, Alan Christensen, John Davidson (sub for W. Jamison), Steve Hart, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Charley Roetting, Dennis Schugk, Tony Smith, Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Wes Jamison (sub: J. Davidson), Jeff Wallace (Faculty Association)

Guests: Jacob L. Thomas (Parliamentarian), David Allred (Assoc Provost), Danni Larsen (A&T Comm), Mike Brenchley (Deans)

B. Minutes from February 12

Motion to Approve: T. Fawcett; 2nd: A. Larsen

Approval: unanimous of all present

II. Senate Organization

A. Remaining Spring 2025 Mtgs: March 12, March 26, April 9, April 23

B. Updates from Division Elections

1. **Business & Tech** - Jay Moosman (Transportation Technology) has been elected as the new senator, replacing Alan Christensen.

2. **Fine Arts** - No updates provided yet. Charley Roetting is eligible for election to a full term.
3. **Humanities** - Rachel Keller (English & Philosophy) has been elected to a full term.
4. **Science & Math** - Trent Fawcett has been reelected to a second term.
5. **Social Science** - Jessica Jones (Education & Family) has been elected as the new senator, replacing Wes Jamison.
6. ***Faculty Association** - No updates.

C. At-Large Committee Elections

1. **GE Committee:** Sannali Dittli and McKay West (Ephraim seats) have been retained by the committee to continue serving for another term in their at-large roles. Crystal Stott has agreed to begin service for Richfield beginning Fall 2025.
2. **College Council:** Jessica Jones is eligible for another term. Nominations will be held for an election after Spring Break.

D. Senate Leadership Elections. One person has agreed to serve as Senate President and another has agreed to serve as Senate Vice-President. Because of a potential conflict with the President and VP being from the same division, the VP candidate withdrew their name. VP elections will be held for other eligible senators soon.

III. Administrative Updates

A. Updates from the Office of the President

No updates.

B. Updates from the Office of Academic Affairs

1. **Prison Education.** During the time the meeting was held, Provost Austin was at the prison, working with W. Jamison and Kristi Stevens (Assoc Provost) to coordinate educational efforts. The Office of Academic Affairs expressed appreciation for the Senate's

work and reaffirmed its willingness to collaborate and maintain open communication.

2. **Stipends & Course Release Model.** T. Fawcett presented proposed revisions to stipends and course releases for department chairs, committee chairs, and program leads, highlighting historical inconsistencies and the expansion of credit releases over time. The committee surveyed department chairs to assess workload distribution and attempted to develop a fair allocation model while minimizing drastic changes. However, variations in department size and responsibilities made standardization difficult, and an initial 15% reduction in credit release was deemed unacceptable.

Statistical Modeling. The discussion also addressed statistical challenges in modeling credit release, with the committee agreeing on key rules to ensure fairness and stability. No department's release would change by more than six credits, and all allocations would be rounded to the nearest three-credit increment. Senators raised concerns about potential unintended consequences, such as enrollment manipulation, and stressed the need for transparency. Some suggested a dashboard tool to help departments understand how the model would impact them.

C. Updates from Deans Council

1. **Reallocation & New Faculty Positions.** The Senate discussed concerns about faculty position reallocations and new hires, particularly regarding the role of deans and department chairs in decision-making. Traditionally, rankings for new positions involved faculty input, but legislative restrictions and administrative processes have created uncertainty. A recent email from Provost Austin helped clarify the process, and senators emphasized the need for continued transparency and faculty involvement to prevent misinformation and anxiety.

Incubation. The discussion also addressed the process of "incubation," which evaluates new programs, and whether faculty leaders had sufficient input in its decisions. Senators stressed the importance of clear communication from the Provost's Office to ensure faculty understand the process and feel represented. President McIff has offered reassurance that reallocations are not

intended to eliminate jobs, and with the legislative reallocation bill likely to pass soon, faculty will remain engaged in discussions to uphold shared governance.

2. **MWF Teaching Schedule.** The Deans recently discussed concerns about faculty members requesting to teach only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (MWF) while avoiding Tuesday-Thursday (TR) schedules. While this issue has arisen in only a few departments, deans expressed concerns about fairness, scheduling ripple effects, and classroom space constraints. No formal policy was proposed, but there was general agreement that such accommodations should not become standard practice.

Flexibility. Some flexibility may be necessary in rare cases to attract qualified faculty or address emergencies, but the majority of deans prefer to discourage MWF-only schedules as a norm. While a few hires have been made under such arrangements, it is not common practice, and faculty should generally expect to teach across a full range of scheduling options.

IV. Senate Business

A. Institutional Review Board Committee (T. Smith, W. Jamison)

1. **Proposed Bylaws.** T. Smith presented proposed bylaws for the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is designed to protect research participants. While the college does not conduct high-risk medical research, faculty and students are engaged in various research activities, making the committee an important safeguard. The bylaws are being reviewed for legal clarity, with plans to have both the college's legal counsel and Risk Management's Staci Taylor examine them. J. Davidson, who has a background as an attorney, suggested edits for clarity and specificity and was invited to submit them for further review.

B. Microsoft-Only Policy & Its Impact on Teaching (J. Thomas, D. Allred)

1. **Problem-Solving Meeting.** The Office of Academic Affairs and any concerned senators or faculty were invited to attend a problem-solving meeting on Friday, Feb. 28 in the IT conference

room. J. Thomas noted that anyone was invited to attend, and that he was willing to serve as the *de facto* senate representative to this discussion.

C. Institutional Goals Form & Post-Tenure Review

Item tabled for future discussion.

D. Decorum Trainings Ad Hoc Committee

1. **Scheduling Constraints.** T. Smith noted that due to scheduling constraints, there was agreement that any training would likely be postponed until the fall semester. The committee has not yet met or begun formal planning, and little progress is expected this semester.

E. Tenured Professor 5-Year Review Subcommittee

1. **A&T Committee Review.** Danni Larsen from the Advancement & Tenure Committee attended the meeting and reported that A&T has already begun implementing the post-tenure review procedures and integrating them into the A&T policy document, rather than having Academic Affairs write a separate policy. The committee has worked extensively on this since November, incorporating procedural updates and aligning the document with state law. A red-lined version will soon be sent to the Senate for review. One key point still requiring discussion is whether appeals should be handled by the Senate.

Timeline. Concerns were raised about faculty undergoing review under a process that has not yet been fully ratified, though it was clarified that these procedures are mandated by state policy. While some senators expressed further concern over the timeline, the administration has supported faculty governance in shaping the policy. The Senate will have the opportunity to review and finalize the document before it moves through College Council and broader campus approval processes.

F. Curriculum Committee

1. **Master Syllabi Revision.** T. Fawcett reported that the Curriculum Committee voted to retain Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in

the course master syllabi while removing other elements like Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The decision aimed to maintain articulation and improve transferability, ensuring faculty and curriculum representatives have clear guidelines.

Faculty Feedback. T. Fawcett noted that faculty feedback was evenly split, with about half expressing no strong opinion. After gathering input, he voted in favor of keeping SLOs. Curriculum representatives, such as Brian Stucki, will serve as liaisons to assist faculty with these updates.

G. Supporting Adjunct Faculty Subcommittee

1. **Recent Luncheon.** H. Withers reported that the subcommittee hosted its first adjunct faculty lunch, with around 14 attendees. The turnout was considered a good start, and the event fostered meaningful conversations.

H. Improved Leadership Training for Chairs

Item tabled for a future meeting.

V. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: S. Hart; 2nd: J. Davidson

Approval: unanimous of all senators present

The Senate adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

The next Senate meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 12, 2025 from 3:30-5:00 p.m.** in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas

Approved: March 12, 2025