



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

Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2022, 3:30 p.m.

[Zoom Meeting ID: 824 1109 2322, Passcode: 180732](#)

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- A. **Senators Present:** Matthew Gowans, Jed Rasmussen (left 4:34), Dennis Schugk, Sandra Cox, Jeff Wallace, Wes Jamison, David Fullmer, Karen Carter, Alan Christensen, Anita Slusser (sub for A. Bahlmann)
- B. **Senators Absent:** Andrew Bahlmann (Anita Slusser, substitute), Adam Burningham, Trent Fawcett
- C. **Guests:** Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Kade Parry and Melanie Jenkins (Provost)

II. Informational Items

A. Update on recent discussion with President Mclff. (M. Gowans)

Both M. Gowans (Senate President) and Heidi Johnson (Faculty Association President), recently met with interim Pres. Mclff as part of their regularly scheduled conferences. Of biggest import was some administrative structural change, in which the college will be reverting to a similar model held before the Brad Cook administration. In particular, a new VP of Student Affairs will be hired, a position once held by Craig Mathie (now retired) and was reorganized under B. Cook. Pres. Mclff believes that this model will offer better support for students.

Senators asked about where the Senate fits on the organization chart, and were reminded that this is part of an ongoing discussion between the Senate, the

Deans, and the Provost's Office. M. Gowans and J. Rasmussen will be particularly involved in the conversation.

M. Gowans also reported Pres. McIff's news that Snow College is the only USHE institution that has increased in all tracked performance metrics.

III. Minutes from Previous Meeting

- A. Review of minutes from October 12, 2022 (attached; J. Thomas)

- B. Vote to approve or amend minutes (M. Gowans)
Moved: J. Wallace; 2nd: J. Rasmussen
Unanimous approval of senators present

IV. Senate Initiative Discussions

A. Update on the Free Speech Policy (W. Jamison)

Parliamentarian's Note: This important and ongoing discussion dominated Senate proceedings. The following is my distillation of the varied conversation that took place during the meeting, including points of consensus as well as the decisions reached. —JLT

W. Jamison reported on his presentation at the Faculty Lunch Bunch on Oct. 11, in which he focused on getting feedback from faculty about academic freedom and the Senate's initiative to improve the existing free speech policy. There seemed to be a consensus among those who attended that better protective measures needed to be put in place in case of a grievance or complaint. When asked about current policy and protective measures in other documents, such as the A&T Policy, W. Jamison indicated that there is nothing in the current Free Speech Policy that necessarily protects free speech, including the fact that it doesn't provide reasons for supporting free speech in the first place. A distinction was made between academic freedom and free speech while recognizing that they are two sides of the same coin.

Consensus: Threats to academic freedom in higher education are real, and many faculty have been dismissed without due process when a complaint arises.

Consensus: Certain threats may soon gain momentum in Utah that could further affect academic freedom, such as constraints included in Senate Bill 257.

Consensus: A better defined procedure needs to be put in place to protect academic freedom on the Snow College campus.

During the conversation, it became clear that it would be necessary to temporarily “put the brakes” on pushing forward a revision to the Free Speech Policy, which—as discussed in many previous Senate meetings—has been stalled by previous legal counsel as unnecessary and difficult. W. Jamison’s work on this subject has been exemplary, but perhaps turning Senate attention to developing a *procedure* would facilitate action.

(A. Slusser noted that if restrictions are placed on academic freedom in the near future, that a policy listed in all syllabi could help protect important but controversial subject matter in classes. K. Parry indicated that the syllabus policy used for concurrent enrollment classes could be adapted for this purpose.)

M. Gowans recommended that the procedure establish a clear process for such a grievance that begins with consultation with the instructor, and if not resolved, consultation with the instructor’s Department Chair, then Dean. After that, the Senate as a whole or by delegation to a subcommittee would review the case and then make a recommendation on the instructor’s status to Academic Affairs. Administration would then make the decision based on the Senate’s recommendation and review. He believes that this process will involve all of the important stakeholders on a question of academic freedom, and most importantly will help solidify faculty voice.

Motion by W. Jamison, **2nd** by A. Christensen and J. Wallace to refocus the Free Speech subcommittee’s work to developing an adjudication procedure in the case of an academic freedom complaint against a faculty member. **Motion passed** with unanimous approval of senators present.

The Academic Freedom Procedure Subcommittee will include W. Jamison, who will serve as chair; D. Schugk; S. Cox; and J. Wallace. The subcommittee will be tasked with developing the procedure in conversation with the Deans Council and the Provost's Office.

B. Update on shared governance discussion with the Deans (M. Gowans, J. Rasmussen, A. Christensen)

No report, however, J. Rasmussen reemphasized the importance of working with the administration to define the Senate's role. This would further help address recurring questions from faculty about what the Faculty Senate is and what it does. The goal in providing a definition, added M. Gowans, is to find a way that each organization on campus, including Senate, can be mutually supportive of each other. K. Parry suggested that defining the role of the Faculty Association will also be important in these conversations.

V. Committee Reports

A. Advancement & Tenure (A. Bahlmann)

A. Bahlmann provided his committee report via email in advance of the meeting. He noted a previously discussed item in the Senate with A&T concerning using a measured approach to student evaluations, that they should be weighted equally with other considerations in the A&T process—a “piece of the puzzle” as opposed to the primary metric. He reported that it's something the committee is willing to discuss more in the future, but that current policy and practice “seems to [already] cover things well in that regard.”

The A&T Committee is also interested in receiving Senate feedback on recent amendments to Policy 410 regarding new hires who come to Snow with tenure at another institution, as well as those who previously had tenure at Snow, left for a while, and then returned. M. Gowans indicated that this will be addressed in the next Senate meeting.

B. Curriculum (S. Cox)

The Curriculum Committee will be hosting a syllabus workshop on Nov. 7 to help faculty complete master syllabi that are up for renewal this semester.

C. Academic Standards (A. Bahlmann)

No report.

D. General Education (T. Fawcett)

No report.

E. Diversity, Inclusion, and Globalization (W. Jamison)

No report; meeting later this week.

F. Honors (A. Christensen)

No report; next meeting on Nov. 1.

G. Library (J. Rasmussen)

No report.

H. Professional Track (K. Carter)

Faculty on Professional Track will be meeting on Nov. 2 with an advisory board to help them with their professional development goals.

I. Service Learning Committee (D. Schugk)

The Service Learning Committee is searching for a new office from which student employees can work. (The former space in the Humanities Building has been repurposed.) Similarly, these student employees may be contacting Deans in the near future to come to division meetings to help get more faculty to include service learning in their classes.

J. Teaching & Learning Center (D. Fullmer)

No report.

K. Adjunct Faculty (A. Burningham)

No report.

L. College Council (M. Gowans)

No report from College Council, though the Board of Trustees did meet that morning (Oct. 26). The board approved the college's performance metrics and all A&T candidates. It also approved the construction of a new Ag Center north of the tennis courts in Ephraim. M. Jenkins noted that Phase I of the construction will be for an arena, and Phase 2 will include the construction of a facility for classrooms and bathrooms.

M. Faculty Association (J. Wallace)

No report.

N. Deans Council (M. Brenchley, J. Rasmussen)

No report.

O. Academic Affairs (K. Parry, M. Jenkins)

K. Parry reported that he and other faculty recently presented at the national Competency-Based Education conference in Florida. M. Jenkins reported that during the evening, the Provost's Office would be hosting its 2nd annual recognition event for 8-10 faculty who have been recently awarded advancement or tenure. She reminded senators that this appreciation event came about as a direct result of Senate advocacy, particularly through the A&T Committee.

P. Student Body (SBO Rep)

M. Gowans noted after the meeting that he contacted Jill Trythall, who oversees Student Body Officers, and she noted that an SBO will be coming to Senate meetings in the future, though it may not be the Student Body Vice-President as has been the tradition.

VI. Senate Orientation

A. Vision for the Snow College Senate, 2022-2023 (M. Gowans)

M. Gowans discussed possible goals for the Senate this year and invited feedback as well as any additional goals senators had in mind. The goals discussed are as follows.

1. Improve connection between faculty and staff.
2. Develop a stronger relationship with Senate committees, and empower committees to have a leadership role on campus.
3. Further define the Senate’s role in shared governance.
4. Develop an academic freedom process and procedure and update the existing free speech policy to protect both faculty and students.

VII. Action Items & Assignments

Assignment	Personnel	Deadline
Invite SBO rep to Senate meetings	M. Gowans	Completed
Talk with A&T about ensuring FETs are fully trained on the weight of student evals	A. Bahlmann	Completed
Academic Freedom Procedure Subcommittee to begin its work	W. Jamison	ASAP
Invite Tammy Hales, Staff Association Pres., to speak to the Senate	M. Gowans	ASAP

VIII. Adjournment

Moved: J. Wallace; 2nd: W. Jamison
Unanimous approval by senators present
Senate adjourned shortly after 5:00 p.m.

IX. Next Meeting & Future Items

The next Senate meeting will be held on **Wednesday, November 9, 2022** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Future Item: A&T Policy 410 revision
Future Item: Selection of Department Chairs Document

X. Attachments

Meeting Minutes, October 12, 2022
Faculty Senate Roster (Updated), 2022-2023
Mission of Faculty Senate
Brené Brown, "The BRAVING Inventory"

Minutes by Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian
Minutes approved November 9, 2022