

Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2026 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Review of Minutes

A. Assembly & Attendance

The Senate meeting began at 3:30 pm.

Senators Present: Trent Fawcett (President), Dennis Schugk (Vice-President), Steve Hart, Rachel Keller, Adam Larsen, Kade Parry, Jason West, Klarissa Wilkinson, Hilary Withers

Senators Absent: Karen Carter, Heather Holland, Jay Moosman

Guests Present: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Daryl Samayoa (Student Body), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Michael Austin (Provost), Rob Holt (Advising)

B. Review of Minutes

Senators reviewed minutes from the **January 14** meeting. K. Parry had previously noted some small adjustments to J. Thomas, who assured everyone that these alterations would be made.

MOTION by R. Keller to approve the minutes. **2nd:** A. Larsen. **Motion carried** unanimously.

II. Senate Membership

A. Spring 2026 Elections

1. Senate Representation

J. Thomas reported that he emailed Dean Anthony Beal and VP Jay Olsen to invite a conversation about faculty Senate representation options for the new School of Professional Studies and the School of Technical Education. He noted that this is an important issue and will require additional time for deliberation.

President Fawcett added that he had spoken with Jay Olsen and said faculty in the new schools are generally interested in serving the institution and want representation in both the Faculty Senate and Curriculum Committee, though the eventual structure remains uncertain. He emphasized a preference for a bottom-up, representative approach rather than a top-down decision, and invited senators to share feedback from colleagues in the new schools. He also expressed concern that the schism could deepen divisions and leave faculty in those schools feeling less connected to the broader college community.

2. Upcoming Division Elections

J. Thomas has emailed all the requisite deans about upcoming elections/appointments.

Current Senator	Term	Eligible for Reelection?	New Senator (July 1)
Karen Carter Business & Tech	2020–2026 (2nd)	No	undetermined
Adam Larsen Fine Arts	2023–2026 (1st)	Yes	undetermined
Steve Hart Science & Math	2024–2026 (filling term)	Yes	undetermined
Dennis Schugk Social Science	2021–2027 (retiring)	No	David Rodriguez (filling term, 2026–2027)

3. Senate-Administered Elections

Election	Nominations Open	Election	Results Announced	Current # of Candidates
Adjunct Representative <i>*All adjuncts may vote</i>	January 26–30	February 2–6	February 9	2
College Council–Richfield <i>*All full-time faculty may vote</i>	January 26–30	February 2–6	February 9	2

President Fawcett reminded everyone about the duties of these offices and encouraged senators to invite interested faculty to apply. Senator Withers raised a question of which adjuncts could vote, as not all are regularly employed for every semester. J. Thomas responded that so long as they teach at least one credit during the calendar year, they should be able to vote. Senator Withers noted that some of the adjuncts she was aware of were not receiving emails from the Senate as the listserv is never fully updated. J. Thomas assured her that any adjunct who contacted him would be sent a ballot.

4. Senate Leadership Elections

J. Thomas updated senators on the status of individuals willing to serve as Senate President or Vice-President for the 2026–2027 term. He reported that T. Fawcett is willing to serve one additional year as Senate President, and that A. Larsen is currently the only person to step forward for Vice-President. It was noted that Service as president includes a three-CHE course release per year, and that the Vice-President primarily fills in for the President as needed.

K. Wood asked whether an untenured faculty member may serve as Vice-President; it was clarified that they may not. After some deliberation, J. Thomas suggested that the Senate conduct a “vote of confidence” at the next meeting for T. Fawcett and A. Larsen, to which senators assented.

5. Parliamentarian

Senators discussed the role of Parliamentarian. J. Thomas noted that he had been told that service was for a four-year term, but that this is nowhere written in the bylaws. He further expressed a willingness to serve for an indefinite time. Senator Keller noted that having a longer-serving parliamentarian helps the Senate retain institutional memory. Term limits were also discussed.

MOTION by R. Keller to retain Jacob Thomas as Parliamentarian. **2nd:** K. Parry. **Motion carried** unanimously.

III. Administrative Updates

A. Faculty Senate President

1. Tech Ed Faculty Contracts & Representation

President Fawcett reported a lengthy conversation with VP Jay Olsen, who is strongly supportive of Tech Ed faculty having representation on the Faculty Senate. VP Olsen argued that because most Tech Ed programs are “two-deep,” Senate service should be feasible for

nearly all Tech Ed faculty. President Fawcett raised concerns about contract structures and contract hours as the split proceeds, noting contracts are currently wide-ranging and are being rewritten (including a service component). He said Tech Ed contracts are generally more “at-will” than tenure-track contracts and do not carry the same review processes or protections, and he advocated that faculty with a proven record of excellent teaching should have protections beyond traditional at-will status. He also noted that Tech Ed teaching assignments are often driven by enrollment, and programs may be reduced when numbers are low.

2. Professional Track Committee & “Vested” Language

President Fawcett reviewed the role of the Professional Track Committee (a Senate committee) in promotions, advancements, and reviews for non-tenure-track faculty, and noted ongoing efforts to harmonize professional-track and tenure-track systems. He noted there are three faculty in traditional academics (software engineers) previously overseen by the committee because they were not hired into tenure-track positions, and asked whether the Advancement & Tenure (A&T) Committee might assume oversight for those individuals. Senator Larsen said broader representation would likely require changing bylaws language from “tenured” to “vested,” a state term that typically provides additional due-process protections. Senator Keller supported the idea but asked whether this was an anomaly; President Fawcett confirmed it was specific to software engineering and indicated it would not be an ongoing issue. Senator Parry asked whether A&T had weighed in and cautioned against a top-down approach; President Fawcett emphasized this was preliminary and would not begin until Fall 2026 at the earliest. Senator Keller said she would raise the question at A&T’s first spring meeting the following Tuesday, and President Fawcett said he would email her a summary.

President Fawcett added that administrative changes to contract language may affect professional-track promotion, and that the Professional Track Committee may need to be reworked. Asked whether the contracts are one-year renewable or ongoing, he said there is no clear answer because Tech Ed contracts are inconsistent and need to be standardized. He noted two Tech Ed faculty are tenured, but otherwise there is no uniform model; he also noted planned contract revisions in Richfield and emphasized the importance of preventing faculty from being “pushed around” in the process. He clarified that the School of Professional Studies will follow traditional pathways.

3. Updating the Faculty Senate Web Page

President Fawcett updated the Senate on the Faculty Senate web page redesign. He thanked the designers and expressed appreciation for D. Allred’s support. He shared his screen and described features including the mission statement, a reduction of committee bullet points

from 13 to 6, possible committee images, and easy access to items such as bylaws and minutes. He said the page would also house documents under review to reduce email volume, would be public-facing, and would be ADA compliant. He requested feedback, stating his goal is to launch the page with Senate approval.

Senator Keller suggested adding a “Quick Links” option for submitting questions or concerns for those hesitant to contact a senator directly. President Fawcett raised concerns about spam and non-faculty submissions; Senator Parry suggested requiring login with school credentials (e.g., Microsoft Forms authentication). Dean Brenchley asked whether public-facing documents could present concerns. Senators discussed options, noting email communication would still be necessary. Senator West noted the Senate could remove the feature if it does not work well. President Fawcett said he hopes the updated page can go live by the next meeting if there are no strong objections and noted refinements can be made once it is in use.

B. Deans Council

1. Sabbaticals

Dean Brenchley reported that the next sabbatical availability would not be until Spring 2027, and discussion focused on whether there might be alternative sabbatical-like options. President Fawcett added that one idea discussed was opening sabbaticals or similar opportunities to support faculty in completing certifications and other credentials. Senator Parry asked about the rationale for the renewed discussion; Dean Brenchley explained that demand currently exceeds available sabbaticals and noted that additional information may be forthcoming as conversations continue.

2. Hiring & Assessment Day

Dean Brenchley noted that the Deans Council also discussed upcoming hires and the hosting schedules for different divisions. He added that Assessment Day information would be forthcoming. President Fawcett said assessment-related updates (including information tied to the Senate web page work) would be posted online for reference.

3. Honors Program & Scholarships

Dean Brenchley said Larry Smith addressed Deans Council regarding the Honors program and shared ideas to increase Honors participation and interest. He noted that participation has declined since the Covid-19 pandemic and that the program currently has about 15–20 active students, to the point that there has been no need to turn students away due to scholarship limits. He invited senators to share ideas with Larry Smith, including suggestions for making

scholarship information more accessible—particularly through the scholarship web page—so students can better understand requirements and opportunities.

President Fawcett noted “red tape” concerns and asked whether the issue is campus-wide. He also reported that some students who received Honors scholarships did not realize the awards included a requirement to enroll in Honors courses, which has created frustration; he referenced additional examples that raised similar concerns. Senator Parry characterized the issue as a communication problem. Senator Larsen added that scholarship reallocation has created uncertainty about available funds, making it difficult to recruit students when the college cannot clearly communicate what scholarship support will be available.

C. Office of Academic Affairs

(A previous **MOTION** by Senator Parry had moved this discussion to earlier in the meeting. It appears here out of order. **2nd:** J. West. **Motion carried** unanimously.)

1. State Program Approvals

Provost Austin reported that the college has received responses from the state on two of three proposed programs and is now cleared to begin both the Architecture program and the Behavioral Tech program. He said the college has not yet heard back from the COE regarding the proposed Rural Entrepreneurship (90-credit bachelor’s degree). He noted that the president was scheduled to speak with the COE that day, and that the question centers on whether two-year institutions can offer three-year bachelor’s programs.

2. Honors Co-Director Search

Provost Austin announced that the college is seeking a co-director of Honors, with a deadline of February 1. He stated the position carries 3.5 CHE each semester, with the option to receive a half-CHE as compensation instead.

3. ADA compliance guidance and training

Requirements. Provost Austin shared an update on ADA compliance, noting that legal guidance from the college’s attorney was less optimistic than what had been earlier reported. He said materials created prior to 2024 do not automatically need to be updated; archived materials or “further study” resources do not need to be made compliant unless they are actively required for the course. However, any material that is required as course content must meet ADA standards.

He outlined key expectations for required materials: documents must be machine-readable (convertible in Acrobat), headings and subheadings should use proper heading functions (not tabs), videos must include closed captions, and images should include alternative description text. He reiterated that pre-2024 materials only need updating if they are being actively required.

Resources. Senator West asked about training resources; Provost Austin said Justin Thorpe in the Teaching & Learning Center has resources and provides training, and that additional staff can assist. He noted that employees have access to full Acrobat and the Adobe Creative Suite, and said converting Word/PDF text to machine-readable format can be a simple operation, while handwritten materials are more difficult. Senator Parry suggested that a tutorial video or step-by-step handout would be helpful and said he had been told such resources would be provided; Provost Austin said he would ask Justin and added that ChatGPT may also be a useful support tool. Senator Hart noted that PDFs with equations present significant machine-reading challenges, to which President Fawcett concurred.

4. Risk & Compliance Expectations. Provost Austin said in his experience the greatest risk comes from predatory law firms rather than students, and described how such firms often search public-facing web pages for noncompliance as a basis for settlement demands. He noted that law firms cannot access content behind the Canvas firewall. He also mentioned pending legislation that would ban such lawsuits in Utah and allow countersuits for frivolous claims. He emphasized the importance of good-faith efforts and documentation, stating that if the college can document compliance efforts, the expectation would be to remediate materials rather than face punitive action. President Fawcett added that he reviewed the DOJ statement and said it indicates that perfection is not expected, and he suggested the Senate need not be overly apprehensive if the college is making sincere efforts toward compliance.

IV. Senate Business

A. IRB Bylaws Update

President Fawcett reported that the IRB bylaws draft is still rough and not ready for wider distribution. He explained that IRB Chair Jon Tyler drafted the bylaws, he (Fawcett) revised them, and the committee has since proposed a one-line change; he shared the current SharePoint version and noted it is brief (about 600 words, 4 pages in its current format). He asked for several senators to review the draft and provide feedback before the next meeting so it can come to the full Senate with more than one set of eyes on it. Senator Keller recommended sending it to Sam Meek, the Chief Institutional Research Officer, for expert review, and President Fawcett agreed, while noting that some provisions involve institutional choices tied

to committee membership. Additional reviewers were suggested (including representatives from high-IRB-use areas such as Social Science and Science & Math, as well as Professors Nick Marsing and Veronika Tait). President Fawcett reiterated that Senate approval is needed before the draft goes to legal counsel and becomes policy, and that the final policy language must remain clear and not overly cumbersome.

B. Calendaring Committee

The proposed academic calendar for 2028–2029 had previously been circulated among senators. Senator Parry asked whether the main change was simply moving Spring Break back two weeks and where the proposal originated (Cabinet, faculty, or Registrar). Discussion indicated that pushing Spring Break was the primary change; Senator Keller clarified that Cabinet had issued three directives and that Spring Break was not one of them, suggesting it arose from faculty/student concerns about a long early-semester stretch with few breaks and a Spring Break that can fall too early (even in February in some years), with ESL half-semester scheduling mentioned as one factor in prior placement. Several senators felt students would likely prefer a later break, and it was noted the change would not take effect until Spring 2029 (Spring Break in the eighth week).

The discussion then broadened to a larger scheduling equity issue: Senator Larsen highlighted that in Spring 2029, Monday/Wednesday courses would meet fewer times than Tuesday/Thursday courses (roughly a week's difference), tied in part to the shift to a Friday commencement; he argued this affects many students and instructional outcomes and urged a compromise to equalize meeting counts. President Fawcett said he had raised the concern and relayed a possible alternative (using a Friday-as-Monday schedule rather than Tuesday-as-Monday), while others noted student surveys strongly disliked day-swaps as confusing and disruptive, and that changes can also complicate concurrent enrollment and family schedules.

D. Committee Unification & Streamlining

1. SPARC

President Fawcett provided an update on committee unification and streamlining discussions, noting this is not imminent but could help create clearer structure. He reported conversations with Senator Hart and Professor Jared Breakall about SPARC and said there is concern about whether consolidation is broadly desired. He reviewed an earlier concept of combining Service Learning and Undergraduate Research under a single committee, noting that Undergraduate Research is currently an informal campus group (not a Senate committee) that has pursued grants, while emphasizing that the IRB must remain separate from any funding-related bodies to preserve the independence of ethical review.

2. Library Committee

President Fawcett also updated the Senate on the librarian search, noting four candidate interviews and inviting senators to share any strong interview questions; he encouraged faculty to coordinate feedback through division representatives. Dean Brenchley added that deans were invited to final interviews, and President Fawcett clarified that the Library Committee is serving as the hiring committee, with deans present to answer questions. He added that a prior suggestion to “offload” the Library Committee should be removed from future minutes, and reiterated that his goal has been to reduce committee overload in response to faculty concerns identified in last year’s Faculty Association survey, while still maintaining fair distribution of service.

E. Senator Requests & Concerns

1. Prerequisite Enforcement

President Fawcett reported discussing prerequisite enforcement with Provost Austin and said that, despite requests for additional review, there is currently no automated enforcement; faculty are responsible for checking prerequisites individually. Senator Parry asked whether communication could be improved, noting some departments appear surprised by this, and Senator Larsen said his area has removed some prerequisites and handles readiness on a course-to-course basis but argued there must be a way to automate enforcement. President Fawcett described the computer system and expressed frustration that automation has not been implemented, stating he intends to advocate for faculty on the issue.

Senator Hart noted that stricter automation could potentially reduce enrollment, but President Fawcett said the college should still do the right thing and referenced an example of a student entering Calculus II by collecting signatures on a form. Senator Parry countered that data suggests the opposite effect, noting that a common reason students leave is feeling unprepared, and argued that allowing students into courses they are not ready for harms retention and student success. President Fawcett said he will continue raising the issue in meetings with President McIff and reiterated that automation is a reasonable request; Senator Larsen asked whether College Council is aware and noted the issue has been discussed for years without resolution.

V. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by J. West. **2nd:** K. Wilkinson. **Motion carried** unanimously, and the Senate meeting concluded at 5:06 pm.

Meeting minutes by Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian
Approved by the Faculty Senate, February 11, 2026