

Meeting Minutes April 26, 2023, 3:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order & Roll Call (M. Gowans, J. Thomas)

The Senate was called to order at 3:31 p.m.

Senators Present: Matthew Gowans (Pres), Jed Rasmussen (VP), Andrew Bahlmann, Adam Burningham, Alan Christensen, Sandra Cox, Trent Fawcett, David Fullmer, Wes Jamison, Dennis Schugk, Jeff Wallace

Senators Absent: Karen Carter

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Melanie Jenkins (Provost), Kade Parry (Asst Provost)

II. Minutes from Previous Meeting

A. Review of minutes from April 19, 2023 (attached; J. Thomas)

B. Vote to approve or amend minutes (M. Gowans)

Motion to Approve: T. Fawcett **2nd:** A. Bahlmann

Approval: Unanimous of those present; 1 abstention (S. Cox)

III. Informational Items

A. Updates from the Faculty Senate President (M. Gowans)

Deans Council. Sheryl Bodrero (Foreign Language) has been selected as the new Dean of Humanities. This is the second time she has served in this role.

Board of Higher Ed. The Board of Higher Ed is planning to adopt a free speech statement similar to the Chicago Principles. M. Gowans noted that the statement seemed to be on the right trajectory to protect free speech.

B. Senate and Senate-Administered Elections (J. Thomas)

GE Committee. Sannali Dittli from Science & Math will begin her term as the Ephraim At-Large Representative beginning this Fall semester, replacing Lorie Hughes, who has concluded an exemplary two terms of service.

IV. Senate Initiative Discussions

A. Policy #402: Academic Freedom Procedure (W. Jamison)

The document will be going to College Council at their next meeting for a final vote.

B. Policy #319: Reduction in Force

The draft policy has completed its first round of revision and is currently undergoing a 30-day review, which ends on May 7. According to M. Gowans, the policy is in good shape, with clear language and guidance from the Board of Higher Education policies. Minor tweaks were suggested to Carson Howell to improve clarity, including the terms “bona fide” and “serious distortion.”

A. Bahlmann expressed satisfaction with C. Howell's responsiveness and willingness to communicate with the Senate. In regards to the policy's timeline,

A. Bahlmann suggested that individuals subject to a reduction in force should have a face-to-face meeting as soon as possible instead of relying on email communication. M. Gowans agreed with A. Bahlmann's point and promised to pass it along to Howell for consideration. Although the policy provides a timeline for communication, it does not specify a requirement for direct contact, making A. Bahlmann's suggestion an important addition.

C. Whistleblower Policy

A. Bahlmann collaborated with Carson Howell to make the amendments that were discussed in last week's Senate meeting. J. Thomas forwarded the email exchange to all Senators, focusing on the change related to the timeframe for discovering infractions. The amendment now stipulates that investigations must occur within 30 days of *discovery* of the event, not when the event occurred. W. Jamison expressed gratitude to A. Bahlmann for his diligent efforts and attention to detail.

D. AI-Generated Essays Statement Update (W. Jamison, K. Parry)

M. Gowans proposed adding a sentence to the Snow College Academic Integrity Policy to reaffirm the institution's core principles against cheating, fraud, and plagiarism. W. Jamison suggested that this addition would give professors more "teeth" in enforcing academic integrity. The Senate discussed where this statement should go and agreed that it should be a college-wide statement rather than a Senate statement. J. Rasmussen suggested that the Curriculum Committee or GE Committee should approve it, and A. Bahlmann agreed. The Senate will forward the statement to the Curriculum Committee for feedback.

The group also discussed AI-generated content in academic work. Provost Jenkins noted that there are ways to use these programs creatively, usefully, and ethically. K. Parry suggested that faculty should update assessment standards and course outcomes, as the technology is always a step ahead. D. Fullmer added that students will likely be more aware of these tools in the future, and the group agreed that the Provost's office, Teaching and Learning Center, Curriculum Committee, Tech Office, and Senate should work together to prepare discussions on A.I. for the fall semester. A. Christensen emphasized that this is about student *learning* more so than cheating. A. Bahlmann acknowledged that

students will always cheat, but there will also always be honest students working hard to learn.

W. Jamison suggested removing program-specific words from the statement, as the technology is constantly evolving. The group agreed to bring up the statement at Fall Assembly and encourage faculty to read it in their classes. The plan is to send the statement to faculty and students now and discuss it again more earnestly in Fall Assembly. The actual policy is under development with Curriculum and will be in place in the Fall.

E. Committee Member Involvement

M. Gowans reported that the Deans are planning to make committee assignments a more integral part of their roles. As a part of this effort, the Senate and the Deans will coordinate to provide further training to department chairs. On August 16, department chairs, Senators, and others will come together from 11-1 to learn about a range of topics that will help them feel empowered to encourage participation in committee roles.

The training will cover a variety of important leadership principles, including academic freedom, running effective meetings, creating agendas, delegation, communication, conflict resolution, engaging committee members, and promoting accountability. The role of Senate representatives and the importance of having designated minutes-takers (a “Parliamentarian-lite” for each committee) will also be discussed. In addition, attendees will explore current issues impacting committees. By providing this training, the hope is that department chairs will feel more confident and prepared to lead their committees effectively.

F. USHE Resolution on Freedom of Expression

The Senate discussed the news that USHE (Utah System of Higher Education) is using the University of Chicago statement as a guideline for a statement on free speech on public campuses, which was met with surprise and approval from M. Gowans. USHE has also drafted a letter to be sent to every incoming Utah college student to make them aware of expectations regarding free speech. The letter includes a commitment to academic freedom, which means that trigger

warnings, canceling invited speakers because their topics might be controversial, and intellectual safe spaces are not supported. This topic has been discussed by the Senate for a few years, and M. Gowans is encouraged to see this unexpected movement by the state. Additionally, this may help clarify academic freedom with concerned parents.

The Senators further discussed the language of the draft resolution and the draft letter to students. A. Bahlmann preferred the Snow College statement, which points out that there can be some reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech if it interferes with the college fulfilling its mission. A. Christensen agreed.

T. Fawcett asked for more clarification on the term “defamation” in the policy and whether it is the hardlined legal definition or simply refers to various kinds of criticism. Provost Jenkins noted that the document throughout does use the term “may” and not “will.” T. Fawcett also pointed out that free expression was meant to be an important aspect of student orientation. M. Gowans believed that this expectation will be conveyed by sending out the letter.

A. Bahlmann disagreed with the total ban on trigger warnings, safe spaces, etc., and believed that the terms need to be defined more clearly. Other Senators believed that the language mainly referred to *imposed* trigger warnings or institutional safe spaces. They also agreed that “condone” is the wrong word, and students can create their own safe spaces but that these should not be an institutional mandate.

M. Gowans will give the Senate’s suggestions to Pres. McIff for the upcoming USHE meeting. Senators also discussed recent news regarding academic freedom at other institutions in the United States affecting accreditation.

V. Senate Orientation

A. Henry Reichman, *Understanding Academic Freedom* (M. Gowans)

The Senate agreed to pick up on reading Chapter 4: “Citizenship” beginning next semester.

VI. Division & Committee Reports

Senators provided updates on their respective committee assignments.

Advancement & Tenure: A. Bahlmann reported that everything was going well for A&T.

General Education: T. Fawcett mentioned that the Senate representative would have a vote in the following year but expressed concern about the committee members' general commitment.

Faculty Association: J. Wallace urged faculty members to address any concerns they have, and to use the F.A. as a resource.

DIG: W. Jamison announced that Fulbright scholar Satya Sethi would soon be leaving, and recommended extending best wishes to him.

Curriculum: S. Cox discussed Argos issues and noted that syllabi deadlines had passed, but that everything was in order. More syllabi renewals would be coming up the following year, and department chairs and deans were reminded of their responsibility to ensure that they get it done.

Honors: A. Christensen reported that it had been a productive year for Honors, with a lot of groundwork laid that had been picked up by Drs. Smith (Larry and Tony). Progress had been made in engagement and changing the system to make it easier for students to participate in Honors. The Banquet on Monday night for graduates went very well, with 75 students showing interest in Honors on their intake survey. The hope is to increase enrollment, and the changes allow concurrent enrollment students to participate more effectively.

Library: Jed announced that a Holocaust Exhibit was coming in September, and encouraged faculty to engage with it. Granary Arts would feature Holocaust-related works, with Dr. Katherine Brown from UVU giving a speech and Adrian Peterson discussing eugenics. *The Book Thief* was chosen for the Page-Turners Book Club, and Carol Kunzler, Librarian, would present Utah newspaper digitized documents about World War II and the Holocaust. Snow College is the only stop in the state for this exhibit, and faculty members can

contact librarians Carol Kunzler or John Ostler to help them develop curriculum to interact with it.

No reports were given from Service Learning, Professional Track, or Adjuncts.

VII. Adjournment

M. Gowans expressed gratitude towards the Senators for their hard work and acknowledged that significant progress has been made this semester. K. Parry shared that this was his final visit as the Assistant Provost after attending almost every meeting for the past three years. He noted that the Senate is the strongest it has been during his tenure at Snow, which will make it easier to carry over ideas. M. Brenchley also stated that the Deans-Senate exchange has been successful in creating new lines of communication, sharing perspectives, and fostering mutual respect.

Motion to Adjourn: A. Bahlmann; **2nd:** J. Rasmussen

Approval: Unanimous of those present

The Senate adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

The first Senate meeting of the next school year will be held on either **Wednesday, August 30** or **Wednesday, September 13** from 3:30-5:00 p.m. in the Academy Room, Noyes Building.

Attachments

Meeting Minutes, April 19, 2023

Policy #319, 2nd Draft

Minutes taken by Jacob L. Thomas

Minutes approved August 30, 2023