Snow College Faculty Senate

Trent Fawcett, President
Adam Larsen, Vice-President
Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

Meeting Minutes

October 28, 2026 @ 3:30pm

I. Call to Order & Review of Minutes

A. Assembly & Attendance

The Senate meeting opened at 3:30 pm.

Present: Trent Fawcett (Pres), Adam Larsen (VP), Jared Breakall, Madi Chadwick*, Josh Hales*, Heather Holland, Rachel Keller, Liz Lee*, Kade Parry, David Rodriguez, Jason West, Klarissa Wilkinson

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Michael Austin (Provost), Greg Wright (Faculty), Trevin Anderson (SBO), Rob Holt (Advising)*, Mike Brenchley (Deans), Stacee McIff (College Pres), Nathan Kilker (Faculty)*

Absent: Jay Moosman

**Indicates online participation through Microsoft Teams.*

B. Review of Minutes

Senators reviewed the draft minutes from the **October 14** meeting. **Motion** to approve the minutes by J. West. **2nd:** H. Holland. **Motion carried** with one abstention by K. Wilkinson.

II. Senate Governance

A. Bylaw Amendments & Updates

1. Meeting Recordings

Vice President Larsen reviewed proposed bylaw amendments concerning executive sessions and meeting recordings. The amendments require electronic access to end upon entering executive session, limiting participation to those attending in person. They also establish secure recording custody under the Parliamentarian, principally for preparing minutes;

restrict public access and further distribution; and permit release by majority Senate vote or access by a senator, faculty member, or college employee with the endorsement of the Senate President or Vice President. Legally required disclosures would also be honored.

Senator West questioned whether the proposed retention period could result in recordings being deleted before a legal complaint was filed. Senator Rodriguez suggested extensions for ongoing matters, and Senator Holland asked about legally required access. President Fawcett stated that Senate meetings were not subject to open meetings law. Following discussion, **the retention period was revised to a minimum of five calendar years**, subject to applicable retention requirements or legal holds; approved written minutes remain the official record.

Motion by A. Larsen to adopt the bylaw amendments. **2nd:** J. West seconded. **Motion carried** unanimously among those present. The changes will be listed as 4.2.1, 4.2.1.1, 4.2.1.2, 4.2.1.2.1, and 4.2.1.2.2 in the **official bylaws**.

III. Administrative Updates

A. Office of the College President

1. AI Discussion and Collegiality

President McIff acknowledged uncertainty about AI's benefits, risks, and educational applications and emphasized the college's responsibility to examine its effects. She welcomed questions, research, and differing perspectives, while distinguishing the institution's obligation to engage from individual employees' freedom to participate. She discouraged categorizing viewpoints by department or division and emphasized that agreement was not required. She asked faculty leaders to approach AI with curiosity and healthy skepticism and reiterated expectations to assume positive intent, communicate directly, address problems constructively, advocate with context and accuracy, support necessary change, model respect across divisions, and give and receive feedback with courage and care. College leadership was committing to the same behaviors.

President Fawcett asked how faculty could hold administrators accountable given differences in institutional authority. President McIff encouraged direct communication and bringing concerns through the Faculty Senate, Faculty Association, and appropriate supervisory channels. Senator Holland asked about recourse when direct conversations had been unsuccessful. President McIff stated that unresolved concerns should be brought to her attention so she could seek a remedy, including concerns about her own conduct. She emphasized that disagreement would remain possible but that conversations should be respectful and professional.

2. AI Grant Funding and Senate Responsibilities

President McIff clarified that $275,000 of the $3 million AI grant was available for training, research, programs, ethical considerations, and implementation. This included $100,000 offered through the Faculty Senate and $175,000 available through an internal grant process. The existing AI taskforce had unanimously approved the internal grant rubric and would determine the internal grant awards. Some funding would support Concurrent Enrollment projects aligned with the grant's K–12 component and the needs of rural schools.

For the Senate's allocation, President McIff outlined potential expenditures: faculty fellowships researching positive and negative effects on student learning; stipends for resource guides, curriculum materials, and training participation; speaker and trainer honoraria; and books, articles, subscriptions, and software. The Senate would establish a committee or taskforce to direct the funding, with an MOU clarifying responsibilities and providing flexibility. She suggested, without requiring, a research repository and discussion board for respectful dialogue. She reiterated that academic freedom would continue to be defended as the college explored AI.

3. Policy 412 and Responsible AI Practices

President McIff acknowledged the Senate's substantial influence on Policy 412 and invited further review as technology and institutional needs change. She identified questions about which AI taskforce would conduct the annual review, language encouraging integration rather than reliance solely on prohibition, and expectations for employees to disclose AI assistance. Dean Brenchley asked about disclosure and enforcement, and President McIff acknowledged practical difficulties in determining when acknowledgment is appropriate. She requested Senate assistance in reviewing these provisions through shared governance.

Senator Larsen raised concerns about using AI with confidential information in faculty evaluations, A&T reviews, and hiring. Senator Keller reported that AI-assisted materials were already appearing in faculty review processes. Provost Austin explained that substantial grant funding supported licensing intended to provide a closed environment, identifying Gemini as the college's available option. President McIff agreed that confidentiality warranted policy consideration. Senator Rodriguez suggested researching institutional best practices, while Senator Holland noted that professional organizations were developing guidance on disclosure and ethical responsibilities that could inform Snow College's approach.

4. Student Perspectives and AI Education

Student Representative Trevin Anderson asked how students could use AI productively while continuing to learn and think independently. President McIff welcomed student participation

and described focus-group feedback indicating that uncertainty about permissible use had discouraged some students from using AI. She emphasized identifying honest, productive practices that develop professional skills and independent thought. Trevin raised further concerns about students seeking shortcuts, and President McIff suggested that preserving meaningful human interaction could distinguish Snow College's approach.

Senator Rodriguez emphasized applying the same respectful communication principles to students as to colleagues and described an AI assignment with an alternative for students who objected. Senator West noted that appropriate applications vary by discipline and should enhance students' abilities rather than replace their contributions. Senator Holland urged attention to when and whether AI should be used, alongside how to use it, and supported research that helps students make those judgments. Provost Austin stated that the grant would support AI training and that Senate-commissioned modules on ethics or appropriate use could be incorporated into the training provided to everyone.

5. Legislative Audit of Post-Tenure Reviews

President McIff discussed the legislative audit of post-tenure evaluations, stating that many findings did not directly reflect Snow College's practices. She thanked the A&T Committee for its commitment to quality and emphasized that chairs and deans must also address performance concerns rather than leave that responsibility entirely to the committee. She expressed concern about recommendations that could become statutory requirements, including review timelines and changes affecting rotating academic leadership. Senator Breakall asked about implications for Snow's leadership structure, and President McIff and Dean Brenchley emphasized the significant expense and inefficiency of replacing rotating leadership with permanent administrative positions, particularly in small departments. Dean Brenchley suggested preparing financial arguments for retaining the current model.

Provost Austin explained that the audit identified cases in which faculty received positive reviews despite negative student evaluations, including concerns about research outweighing teaching in tenure decisions. Although the findings were not directed primarily at Snow, resulting legislation could affect the college. Senator Holland questioned reliance on student evaluations, noting that rigorous, effective instructors may receive unfavorable ratings. Provost Austin reported raising concerns about overreliance on those evaluations, potential incentives for grade inflation, and faculty departures not reflected in the findings. Senator Larsen also noted incomplete student participation. President McIff stated that the college would monitor legislative developments.

6. Regional Summit and Transfer Issues

President McIff reported that groups involved in the Regional Summit—including academic and technical education and Student Affairs—were developing objectives with measurable timelines. She requested information about difficulties students encounter when transferring to UVU. Dean Brenchley noted that awareness of transfer and matriculation problems varied among programs and asked faculty to report concerns to chairs and deans. He was requesting reports from programs within his school to identify those issues.

7. Program Governance and Review

President McIff reported that a recent Board of Trustees retreat addressed program governance and increased attention to USHE performance dashboards. She expressed concern about applying salary outcomes to two-year institutions and noted that Snow's Board could not independently approve additional four-year programs considered outside the college's mission. She distinguished reviews of newly approved programs, existing five-year cyclical reviews, and a proposed annual review of all academic disciplines based on enrollment, completion, and related measures. Underperforming programs would be flagged for institutional response, with dashboards updated annually for public access.

President McIff emphasized the importance of a functional Badger140 program health taskforce and suggested reviewing its criteria against USHE's expectations. Provost Austin noted that enrollment and completion information was already available through the dashboards and that monitoring program performance was becoming an increasingly important responsibility for chairs and deans. He encouraged developing plans before external concerns arose so the college could demonstrate that it was already responding.

President McIff concluded by thanking senators for their additional work and participation in shared governance.

B. Faculty Senate President

1. A&T Dashboard

President Fawcett updated the Senate that the A&T dashboard development is advancing. He expressed his optimism, and his hope that it would alleviate some of the burdens on chairs, searching for documents, back-and-forth, etc.

2. Faculty Handbook Update

Senator Larsen reported that he had volunteered to lead the Faculty Handbook update and invited comments on the shared document. President Fawcett reported that Amy Noblett was

seeking a meeting with JimBob Pipes, the college web developer, to discuss moving the handbook from a PDF to a web-based resource. He envisioned housing it on the Faculty Senate website, with a possible link through mySnow, to help faculty find answers to their questions.

C. Student Body Representative

1. Upcoming Student-Led Focus Group

Trevin Anderson reported that student senators were preparing questions for an upcoming focus group and would share the findings with the Faculty Senate. Dean Brenchley welcomed student feedback and encouraged faculty to address concerns within their responsibilities. Senator Breakall requested questions about how students believe teaching should adapt to AI, and Senator Holland suggested asking about students' overall AI-related concerns and fears. Anderson also reported that a previous focus group revealed uncertainty about career opportunities and next steps after an associate's degree, including how to connect with employers and transfer institutions.

2. Mentoring Students

Senators discussed improving mentorship and helping students understand and communicate the value of their degrees. Senator Parry emphasized faculty guidance in explaining how an associate's degree supports students' goals. Senator Larsen described arts orientation and capstone courses that prepare students for transfer and suggested better publicizing available resources. Senator Rodriguez proposed asking students how confidently they understand the transfer process, while Senator Breakall described faculty mentorship models at other institutions. President Fawcett affirmed mentoring as a faculty responsibility, and Senator Holland emphasized making students aware that they can approach faculty about future plans. Vice President Larsen noted that declaring a major can also help connect students with faculty mentors.

D. Office of Academic Affairs

1. AI Director Hiring Committee

President Fawcett reported that Academic Affairs had requested a faculty representative for the hiring committee for the grant-funded AI Director position. Because of the short deadline, he asked Vice President Larsen and asked Senator Hales to serve, both of whom agreed.

2. MOU for Senate AI Funding Allocation

President Fawcett also reported receiving a draft MOU from Academic Affairs concerning the Senate's proposed AI funding allocation. He had not signed it, citing concerns about its provisions and noting that the Senate's earlier motion stipulated that the Senate would draft the agreement. Senator Breakall questioned who had determined the proposed spending categories, and Vice President Larsen expressed concern that the draft imposed restrictions inconsistent with how the funds had been presented as discretionary. Senator Parry reaffirmed the original motion's intent and anticipated Senate consideration of the agreement. Senators Holland and Rodriguez volunteered to assist with drafting, with discussion of completing a draft by the Monday before the next Senate meeting.

E. Deans Council

1. Data Program Dashboards

Dean Brenchley reported that the Deans Council devoted its meeting to reviewing program dashboards. He emphasized the importance of chairs and deans understanding the data, where it is housed, and how it will inform decisions. He expressed concern about identifying potential problems through the dashboards and the extent to which the data would guide evaluations of programs and the college.

IV. Senate Business

A. AI Grant Funding and Senate Responsibilities

1. Grant Expenditures

President Fawcett explained that grant expenditures must relate to AI and that funding decisions must be documented. He invited discussion of whether the Senate, a subcommittee, or an advisory body should evaluate proposals and allocate funds. Senator Parry suggested a Kuali proposal form, which Senators Keller and Breakall supported as a way to invite faculty ideas and promote transparency. Senator Breakall recommended a subcommittee to prevent proposal review from dominating Senate meetings, while Senator Keller suggested that an advisory committee rank proposals for final Senate approval. Vice President Larsen questioned the role of the appointed AI taskforce and its established rubrics. President Fawcett stated that the Senate could develop its own rubric for its allocation, and senators emphasized clarifying that authority in the MOU.

2. Timetable

In response to questions about timing and payments, President Fawcett clarified that the current year's $50,000 must be spent by June 30 and could not roll over. He suggested May as a possible period for funded faculty work, noting the difficulty of arranging spring course releases. Senator Breakall asked whether awards would be paid in advance or reimbursed after completion, and Senator Larsen noted that Human Resources would need to assist with payment arrangements. No funding structure was adopted, and discussion would continue. President Fawcett requested faculty feedback for proposed AI policy recommendations at the next meeting and invited concerns and positive developments to share with the Board of Trustees in three weeks.

V. Adjournment

Motion by K. Wilkinson to adjourn the meeting. **2nd:** D. Rodriguez. **Motion carried** unanimously. The Senate meeting concluded at 5:03 pm.

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

AI Disclosure Statement. *The Parliamentarian personally took the original meeting notes and used ChatGPT to assist with organizing, condensing, and clarifying those notes for the written minutes. The Parliamentarian subsequently reviewed and revised the completed minutes for accuracy and remains responsible for their content. The AI service was configured so that the material provided in this process was not used to train AI models.*