

Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2025 @ 3:30pm

I. CALL TO ORDER & REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Senate assembled in the Academy Room, Noyes Building, at 3:30 p.m.

Present: Trent Fawcett (Pres), Dennis Schugk (VP), Karen Carter, Trent Hanna, Steve Hart, Rachel Keller, Kade Parry, Jason West, Klarissa Wilkinson, Hilary Withers

Absent: Heather Holland

Guests: Jacob Thomas (Parliamentarian), Mike Austin (Provost), Mike Brenchley (Deans), Adrienne Rice (Student Rep), Jonathan Bodrero and Crystal Stott (TLC Directors)

Adrienne Rice, the student representative to the Senate for this meeting, introduced herself to the Senate.

Senators reviewed the draft minutes of the previous meeting on **September 24**. K. Parry suggested one small correction, which J. Thomas implemented.

MOTION by K. Parry to approve the 9/24 minutes. **2nd** by S. Hart. **Motion carried** unanimously.

II. SENATE MEMBERSHIP

A. Adjunct Senator Stipend

President Fawcett reported that the Deans Council has approved a stipend for adjunct faculty serving on the Faculty Senate, with the condition that the recipient be currently employed as an adjunct. Because of current Senate composition, the stipend will take effect once such an eligible adjunct senator is serving. The stipend amount will be \$500 per semester. Provost Austin clarified that the payment is tied to adjunct status rather than to a specific Senate role, recognizing that adjunct faculty are not contractually required to perform college service. Any adjunct serving on a Senate committee will therefore receive a stipend in addition to their teaching pay. The Provost's Office will handle payment processing each semester, and faculty were reminded that the Senate President should ensure the request is submitted to the deans to prevent the stipend from lapsing.

Senators also discussed adding a clause to the Senate Bylaws to formalize this process going forward.

MOTION by K. Parry to have the Parliamentarian draft an amendment to Senate Bylaws in which the Senate will regularly petition the Deans Council for adjunct senators to receive a stipend during each semester of service. **2nd** by S. Hart. **Motion carried** unanimously.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

A. Faculty Senate President

1. Meeting of USHE Faculty Senate Presidents. President T. Fawcett reported on his recent meeting with faculty senate presidents from other Utah System of Higher Education institutions. The discussion extended beyond its scheduled time, highlighting widespread concerns and similar challenges across campuses. Some research universities are shifting new hires from a 3/3 to a 4/4 teaching load, reflecting broader structural changes. While Snow College does not share the same research expectations, Fawcett noted that many of the issues raised were familiar to Snow faculty. He explained that these meetings occur about once every three months and invited senators to share any concerns that could be voiced at the system level to strengthen faculty representation statewide.

B. Office of Academic Affairs (Provost)

1. Canvas Use & Limitations Document. Provost Austin clarified that the restriction on faculty crosslisting course sections on Canvas stems from legal interpretation rather than explicit statute. Although FERPA does not directly prohibit crosslisting, the Utah Attorney General's Office has determined that allowing students in one section to view any academic information from another section constitutes a violation. Ignoring that interpretation would remove the institution's legal protection, so Snow College can no longer permit faculty to cross-list their own courses.

Several senators expressed concern about implementation and training. Provost Austin noted that the change should take effect beginning next semester. Senator Parry commented that the language in section 50 of the document is unclear and that some institutions do cross-list but through a centralized office, such as Teaching and Learning or Title IX, rather than allowing individual faculty to do so. Fawcett asked whether Snow might explore a similar, streamlined process, and Austin suggested that additional clarification from Associate Provost Allred and TLC Director Thorpe would be helpful before any changes are finalized.

Senator Parry also asked whether the document represents policy or procedure and when feedback is due. Fawcett responded that while it is currently procedural, the intent is to move it into formal policy, with a 30-day review period anticipated due to the legal implications involved.

2. Proposed Changes to Course Evaluation Language. Senate President Trent Fawcett invited feedback on Academic Affairs' proposed revisions to course evaluations. Some faculty expressed concern about removing the "time spent" question, though divisions may still add discipline-specific items. Senator Keller clarified that student evaluations are required for accreditation and tenure review, even if faculty are not obligated to act on every comment. The goal, she said, is to preserve consistent student feedback while allowing flexibility across departments. Discussion followed about the best way to collect faculty input—through division meetings, surveys, or other channels—with senators agreeing on the need for meaningful but manageable participation. Fawcett summarized that the Senate's role is to maintain academic freedom while keeping the process practical; no taskforce was created, and the review process will continue as planned.

Concerns were also raised about low student participation rates. Keller noted that A&T flags response rates below 50 percent and that online courses tend to receive fewer evaluations. Suggestions included in-class reminders, posting tips on the MyFaculty page, and creating Canvas pop-up notifications or optional assignments to prompt completion. The student representative Adrienne Rice supported these ideas, saying that reminders would help busy students remember to respond. Provost Austin added practical solutions could improve engagement.

D. Faculty Association

1. Faculty Poll Results. Senator Parry presented results from the recent faculty poll, noting responses from 65 full-time and 30 adjunct faculty. The survey identified compensation as the top concern for both groups, followed closely by burnout, workload strain, service commitments, and transparency. Parry emphasized that roughly 80% of respondents cited burnout and workload as their most pressing issues. The open-ended question generated over 50 pages of constructive suggestions rather than mere complaints, providing valuable input for Faculty Association priorities. Parry explained that the FA plans to use this data to develop a three-year advocacy plan and intends to share a summary of the results with all faculty later this month. In discussion, senators noted the impact of inflation on advancement bumps. Parry observed that Snow College remains the only USHE institution that has not adjusted these increases in recent years.

E. Calendaring Committee

This agenda item was tabled for the next meeting with high priority.

IV. SENATE BUSINESS: POLICIES & PROGRAMS

A. AI in the Classroom Taskforce

1. Microcredentials Course. The Senate received a brief update on the development of a microcredentials course for AI, which will currently not be offered for credit—as such, it does not yet fall under faculty purview. This brief update led to further discussion on special topics courses being developed for each division, as follows.

2. Creation of Special Topics Courses. President Fawcett reported that the Curriculum Committee recently approved a new “special topics” course designation (numbered 2900 for each prefix) to allow faculty to pilot emerging subjects such as the proposed AI microcredential course. He explained that this designation provides an expedited pathway for testing short-term or experimental curriculum while a more formal course proposal moves through the standard approval process. Senators discussed safeguards to ensure the designation is not used to bypass normal curriculum review. Provost Austin and others recommended limiting special topics courses to two offerings before requiring a permanent course number and catalog entry. This policy, they agreed, would balance flexibility for innovation with appropriate academic oversight. Concerns were raised about transferability and the perception of “mission creep” from other institutions, but Fawcett affirmed that clear guidelines and limits would address those issues as the AI microcredential transitions toward a full academic course.

3. Special Topics Business Course. The Business Department is creating an AI-focused course under their own special topics banner to be launched in the Spring.

4. Faculty Fellow Search. Academic Affairs has opened applications for a faculty fellow to serve as the point-person for AI issues moving forward.

5. Requirement for AI Policy on All Syllabi. Previously, faculty had concerns about whether requiring an AI policy on every syllabus was necessary. J. Thomas, the Senate-appointed representative on the AI Taskforce, noted that if there is no course-specific policy stated, then it defaults to the Senate’s overarching policy of “allowed unless prohibited.” Faculty who do not include an AI policy are therefore allowing students to make the most liberal interpretations of that policy possible. Thomas further noted that in the future Simple Syllabus will have a space available for AI Policies so faculty remember to include one. Sample statements will be provided which faculty can copy and paste, or they are able to create their own.

6. Current AI Policy Draft. J. Thomas reviewed the newest institutional AI policy draft and invited senators to approve it after discussion. President Fawcett invited feedback. Discussion centered on how the policy distinguishes between faculty and student responsibilities. Senators agreed that guidance for students—such as checking course syllabi for AI expectations—should appear

within the section directed at faculty to clarify where responsibility lies for communicating course-specific rules. Another significant portion of the discussion focused on how to address “factual accuracy” in AI-generated work. Several senators observed that accuracy can be discipline-dependent, but all agreed that students must remain accountable for the information they submit, regardless of whether it was produced by AI. Submitting fabricated sources or false claims, even unintentionally, was affirmed as a violation of academic integrity. Senators proposed revising the language to make clear that students are responsible for verifying the accuracy and ethical use of any AI-generated content.

MOTION by R. Keller to forward the AI Policy draft to the Curriculum Committee with continued minor refinements as discussed. **2nd** by D. Shugk. **Motion carried** unanimously.

V. SENATE BUSINESS: COMMITTEES

A. Committee Unification & Streamlining

1. Background. Senate President Fawcett led a discussion on possible restructuring of Senate committees to reduce faculty workload, citing survey data showing burnout and service strain as widespread concerns. He encouraged senators to gather feedback from their divisions and emphasized that maintaining faculty oversight remains essential, but that the overall number of committee assignments should be reduced. His proposal would eliminate approximately ten total committee roles—two per division—amounting to an estimated 8–9% reduction in Senate committee service.

2. Discussion. Among the recommendations were combining the Library and Teaching & Learning Center Committees, removing the GAB Committee from Senate oversight (while maintaining its function independently), merging the Service Learning and Undergraduate Research Committees into a single SPARC committee, and restructuring the IRB to operate under a more streamlined model. Senators discussed how IRB reviews could be expedited or declared exempt by a director, who would still work with a full committee for non-exempt cases. Members agreed that while a single person should not make final decisions, an appointed IRB Director—possibly with a course release—could manage training and routine reviews more efficiently. Concerns were raised about maintaining adequate service opportunities for faculty if committees are reduced, particularly for those seeking tenure and advancement. Several senators suggested periodic review of committee structure to ensure equity in workload and meaningful participation. The conversation concluded with general support for pursuing modest consolidation, with implementation targeted for January pending further division feedback.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by T. Hanna to adjourn. **2nd** by K. Wilkinson. **Motion carried** unanimously.

The Senate meeting concluded at 5:07 p.m.

Future Meetings: Aug. 27, ~~Sept. 10~~, ~~Sept. 24~~, ~~Oct. 8~~, Oct. 22, Nov. 12, Dec. 10, Jan. 14, Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 25, Mar. 11, Mar. 25, Apr. 8, Apr. 22

Meeting minutes by Jacob L. Thomas, Parliamentarian

Approved by the Faculty Senate on November 12, 2025.