

FACULTY SENATE MEETING MINUTES

November 16, 2023

4:00-5:30pm

Approved

Attending: Kelly Goonan, Abigail Larson, Scott Knowles, Daniel Eves, Gary Wallace, John Benedict, Christian Bohnenstengel, Cody Bremner, Chris Graves, Scott Hansen, David Hatch, Steven Hawkins, Maren Hirschi, Jon Karpel, Bryan Koenig, Michael Kroff, Elise Leahy, Andrew Misseldine, Michelle Orihel, Rachel Parker, Joshua Price, Amanda Roundy, Grant Shimer, Ryan Siemers, Kyle Thompson, Joel Vallett, Qian Zhang

Not Attending: Mitch Greer

Proxies: Stacy Hurst for John Meisner

Guests: Mindy Benson, Jon Anderson, James Sage, John Lisonbee, Jake Johnson, Camille Thomas, Matt McKenzie, Alexis Mccliff, Tessa Douglas

1. Call to order (4:03)
2. Recognition of Presenters and Guests
 - a. Tessa Douglas, Director of Equal Opportunity Office
 - b. John Lisonbee, Staff Association President
 - c. Alexis Mccliff, SUUSA VP of Academics
 - d. Camille Thomas, Asst. Provost of Faculty Engagement
 - e. Jake Johnson, Asst. Provost of Leadership Development and Compliance
 - f. James Sage, Associate Provost
 - g. Jon Anderson, Provost
 - h. Mindy Benson, President
3. Proxy Representation:
 - a. Stacy Hurst, TED
4. Approval of Meeting Minutes: [October 19, 2023 minutes](#) (4:04)
Tabled minutes – need to include Abi’s comments.
5. Events and Announcements (4:06)
 - a. HR will be hosting another **Benefits Fair in the Spring**. If you have any feedback from the Fall event or anything you would like the planners to consider, please reach out to Shelly Merrill, Benefits Manager shellymerrill@suu.edu
 - b. A link to [report an incident](#) has been added to the MySUU Portal. Please encourage folks in your areas, including students, to file a report if they have any concerns. Emergencies should always call 911, or 1911 from an office phone.
 - c. AFT: **The F.A.S.T. Fund is an emergency student aid fund** to assist SUU students in moments of crisis. Since faculty are often the first to come to know about

students in need, the fund allows faculty to provide direct financial assistance to students quickly without impacting student financial aid or tax status. Faculty can reach out to Gretchen Ellefson (gellefso@suu.edu) or Matt Newsom (matthewnewsom@suu.edu) if you want to ask for funds for a student in need. Faculty can also [donate to the fund](#).

- d. **Employee giving campaign** reached its goal of 250 new donors on Tuesday Nov. 7! This unlocked \$1,000 from both President Benson and Provost Anderson, contributing an additional \$2,000 toward student scholarships. Thank you to all who contributed! The [campaign is still open](#) and will run through the end of the day November 24, 2023.
- e. Wednesday November 29: **SUU Day of Thanks**. Thank You cards and treats. [Sign up to staff a station](#).

6. Information Items: (4:10)

- a. Welcome Tessa Douglass, new **Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity** In Jake Johnson's old role –Title 9, the non harassment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity functions of the University. So my admin assistant, Berkeley, she's been reaching out to all of the academic departments, and a lot of the campus student focus departments with staff for some soft outreach and relationship building to get to know you so you can get to know us better. So hopefully, I'll be seeing some of you in those meetings as well. Anyway, I'm really excited to be back at SUU.

Bryan: I've been working with Jake Johnson about Title 9 data collection and a student survey regarding their experiences, if any. Are taking this over or is Jake finishing it up?

Tessa: That hasn't been passed on to me – he might want to finish that but I will talk to him and see what he plans to do.

- b. **Thunderbird Awards** coming up! Nominations open January 10. Committee Chairs, please provide feedback on nomination and selection process to Kelly or Bailey (baileybowthorpe@suu.edu)

There will be one central place to nominate faculty, staff or students. If you are on an award committee or a committee chair and have any feedback, please let Kelly or Bailey Bowthorpe know before the nominations start. We really want to celebrate our colleagues.

- c. National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), and Society for Experiential Education (SEE) [Faculty Survey on Careers in the Curriculum](#) – please encourage faculty to complete the survey. SUU will receive a free campus report of findings if we receive a sufficient number of responses. The survey is open until December 31,

2023. Respondents have the option to be entered to win a \$100 Amazon gift card.

Kelly: After the Thanksgiving break, I will be sending out a notification to all faculty about the National Association of Colleges and Employers Faculty survey on careers in the curriculum. This was something that was presented to Brandon Street over in Career Services, and he reached out to us to ask about the value of participating in this survey. After consulting with our colleagues in the Provost office and some other folks on campus, we felt that this is a really valuable effort. Their goal is to find out what kinds of career and professional aspects are incorporated into the classroom. I will send out an announcement. But if you could also share that with your departments and encourage your colleagues to fill out that survey. If we get enough responses, we will receive a free campus report which we think will be really useful, especially as we're trying to align some of our practices with the new strategic plan and other initiatives happening at SUU.

- d. [Affordable Learning Materials Usage Survey](#) (Chris Younkin)- The purpose of the two-question Affordable Learning Materials Usage survey is to discover how affordable learning materials are currently being used by instructors at SUU. For the purposes of the survey, learning materials are considered affordable if the total cost to students for the course is \$50 or less. The survey will be open through the end of the Fall 2023 Semester.

Chris: We have 189 responses to our survey – the purpose is to get an understanding of how affordable learning materials are being used on campus. That includes basically any required materials for classes that are \$50 or less. The survey will be open until the end of the semester.

- e. Reminder: Senators who cannot make a scheduled meeting may send a proxy. After two consecutive unexcused absences without a proxy, the Secretary notifies the Senator. After three unexcused absences the seat is vacated ([Faculty Senate Bylaws, Article 3](#)).

7. Action Items:

- a. None

8. Discussion Items: (4:19)

- a. New Award: Distinguished Faculty for General Education

After attending the GE and Educated Persons conference in SLC – John Lisonbee wondered if we wanted to consider a Distinguished Faculty for General Education award.

John: There was some concern among attendees about valuing the work of those teaching these classes.

Kelly: A GE designation on their courses would qualify them to win this award. Could be something we include for Spring 2025.

Scott: I'm not sure if there is a clear distinction between the Distinguished Educators award and this idea – this could balloon into other specifics. I'm not sure what the justification is for honing in on this one specific group, when there are a number of other groups we could also honor.

Ryan: I wasn't at the conference but I did get a sense from the last GE meeting that there is a perception problem on the value of the GE courses and that there needs to be better messaging. Perhaps in departments too, that this is less valuable. Not sure if an award is the best way to address this but I see what John is addressing here.

Michelle: I take Scott's point about having awards for every specialty but GE classes are often seen as not as valuable or status in teaching these classes. I teach these and I love it. It would not be a bad idea to have an award.

Chris: This might be a good opportunity to open up a conversation about GE and reframe what its purpose is – panel discussions across campus? – about how we and the students think about these classes.

Elise: It seems very discipline dependent because all of my colleagues teach a GE class – everybody does everything. One more award/opportunity to be appreciated.

David: I'm warming to this idea – and the importance of general education. Something to be said about recognizing the value of GE and the public value for a university education.

Christian: Many of our GE courses are being taught by adjunct faculty. Would they be eligible, and could there be an award just for adjuncts?

Josh: I second Andrew and Scott's comments about distinguishing this award from the other awards. The current awards are open to all faculty and departments. Not all faculty members have the opportunity to teach GE.

Michelle & Scott: I would support an award for adjuncts.

Rachel: The feeling expressed by GE educators of being “overlooked” also happens at the other end of the spectrum, with Graduate instruction.

Scott: Just another thing that came up in the chat is an adjunct award. So if we're going to continue to add categories, we've got graduate and adjunct.

Kelly: Sounds like there is some interest and support in doing this. Would there be a small group of people in the spring to take on putting together some criteria for these awards and presenting them in the spring? Elise Leahy, David Hatch, Rachel Parker, Michelle Orihel, Christian Bohnenstengel are willing. Please let me know if you would like to join this effort.

- b. UBHE priority item: “90 credit Bachelor’s degrees”
 - i. [Nov. 3 Board meeting](#) (discussion begins around 38:45 and ends around 1:10:30)
 - ii. SUU’s response

Kelly: Nobody has asked me about the less than 120 credit degrees. So I don't know if that means that people don't read the agenda or you all are good about not jumping to conclusions and content to wait until this meeting to learn more. This has come up in a couple of our previous discussions, as you all are aware, Scott Wyatt had four initiatives that he was kind of tasked with from the Board of Higher Education. To explore one of those was a less than 100 credit and a 120 credit bachelor's degree. There has been some movement on this, and so I've asked Provost Anderson if he would provide the context to what we know so far regarding where the board is going, and then how SUU plans to respond.

Jon Anderson: We have tried to bring a lot of topics to the Senate – this has changed more than any other topic. We are learning that BYU-I and Ensign College are the only institutions in the country that are being allowed to offer a degree in less than 120 credits. This started with BYU Pathways for international degrees – 12-14 institutions across the country asking why there are 120 credits. Accreditors are so far turning these requests down. After working with NW their staff approved a trial for BYU-I and Ensign College to offer seven bachelor's degrees. Two bachelors of applied science with Ensign College and five bachelor's degrees with BYU-I. I had a conversation with the President of Ensign College and their accreditation liaison Mark Gilbert who heads the LDS Church’s education system (which Ensign and BYU are a part of) about all these variables. Others concerned with this information finding and I have compared notes and candidly, not a lot of our notes matched. We are all getting different stories from different places. We do know the Board of Higher Ed for the state of UT is very interested in this and wants to see if institutions can offer bachelor's degrees between 90-120 credits and which types of degrees.

These are all the questions – there is a link to the discussion. Please watch. They have asked the Commissioner’s office to bring forth some options for their Dec 1st meeting (or Nov 30th). We have a copy of that memo, though it’s not a public document.

Shared link of draft memo –

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1n--XeUL9JqkEO6djXnDkGWmoHWMCNs_nbWnczJI4km2c/edit

Outlines the current thinking and the conversations that have been taking place. Until we know what the market will look like and bare – bachelor of accelerated studies to test the market. We still have SUU policy that will have to go through and put in our own parameters and requirements on these degrees.

Chris: I personally think that anything we can do to lessen the financial burden on students we should consider. Questions about how it will be accepted in the real world – but I wonder how many people would care about 90 and 120 credits.

Jon: The idea is not to cut GE at all or major requirements. We have 26 potential degrees that have at least 30 open elective credits. These are the ones that would be reduced. We wouldn't do this for degree programs that have specialized accreditation. We would do this for degree programs that have required more than 90 credits already within the major and we just start out with a very small subset.

Gary: If this does go through there are a lot of universities where you can get your BA and Masters together and this could happen to us that would help students.

Jon: That has happened in our system, that you have several merged programs with less than 150. If you stay at that institution, you get a bachelor and a master's degree in the same discipline.

Grant: Electives aren't there just for fun but to provide choices in different careers. A lot of our programs have a large selection because there are many career options and students can customize their degree which is important for many of us.

Kelly: Thank you, Grant. To clarify, a lot of majors have electives, or they may have four or five courses that students can choose from. We're not talking about those electives. The question is, basically, if I complete my GE, I complete my scientific inquiry, and then I complete my Major, and I'm at 102 credits, can I finish and get my degree, or do I have to take 18 credits of other things.

That is what's driving this interest but it would not require degree programs to change or remove electives from the degree program.

Josh: Econ degree requires 22-50 free elective credit hours. One of the reasons we do not prescribe these credits is to give students the flexibility to choose a complimentary minor or emphasis to better prepare them for the careers that they choose (analytics, finance, public policy, poli sci, etc.). If given the choice, students would likely choose the 90 credit hour degree. But this may make them worse off in their post-grad plans.

James Sage: Grant raises a point. Imagine you do finish, like Kelly was saying, in like a hundred or 102 credits. Right now there is no Title 4 funding available for this type of degree. So first of all, the affordability would absolutely escape many of our students, because they wouldn't be qualified for any form of Federal financial aid or VA benefits. So keep that in mind that this is completely uncharted territory. The second thing is that if they are enrolled in a program that requires 102 credits to complete this degree, then once you hit 102 credits, it's very hard to qualify for any additional Federal Aid. There is a concern for diversity in their training, and no optionality to get a minor in some other marketable area and leave with a single focus on training. For instance, if they finish their geology major, and they also want to do technical writing or marketing or professional sales or anything else to complement their main degree program, if we index it to a smaller credit number, that could actually cut off students from being able to build out their experience and to be more competitive upon graduation. So that's assuming we can even figure out the federal financial aid eligibility. But then, after that, it would be indexed to the number of credits again, this is just uncharted territory. We don't know what will happen. Mike: Could you clarify that Ensign and BYU-I are the only ones? It makes me nervous when these two schools are the only ones doing this and that we're seeing this as aspirational and going down this untested road.

Jon: Yes, they are the only ones that have approval from an accrediting agency for a 3-year pilot.

Kelly: Provost Anderson did share the documents from the Board of Higher Education with me, to provide some context. Once those become public, in that they are discussed and presented at the board, I will share those with the Senate. So that you have them. There's some interesting layers to this. We were surprised by the request to have something prepared by December 1st, but it seems that BYU-I and Ensign are doing their pilot, which doesn't begin until spring of 2024, and it's authorized for 3 years. It does not sound like there is going to be much opportunity to forge ahead with this kind of a change too quickly as they're gathering data on how that pilot runs. I don't want folks to

freak out that we're going to have to have these things in place immediately. The Board of Higher Ed has expressed some urgency in this but it doesn't necessarily mean that we need to come up with a whole new system right away, though we have been asked to have something prepared by December 1st.

Grant: Are those two pilot universities/colleges, and how they run this are those on campus degrees, or those online degrees, or both?

Jon: As of right now the BA of Science at BYU-I are online through their Pathway students, which is a program that their students can complete in two years. They get about 12-24 credits and then matriculate into a BYU-I online degree program. So these options would be for their online audience. It's very mixed as to whether that's going to roll on the BYU- Idaho campus or not anytime soon. It's more likely it would roll out to the Ensign college students that are face-to-face. But we don't know that yet.

Ryan: I don't know if it's productive for us to debate this now – it seems the members of the Board need to do a little more to learn about this situation. So until that gets moving– How soon do you think we'll know more–from theory to practice–on this?

Jon: Somewhere around from November 30 to early December. The Board just decided to remove the statement for institutions where bachelors require 120 credits. I doubt they will go the direction of having specific degree types. I bet they'll just remove it from policy which pushes it then to us as an institution, to have the conversation with our Board of Trustees and we may go have that conversation sometime in the early spring, mid-spring. Even if we, at that point, decide we want to move forward with these two or three degree programs and our Board of Trustees agree to that and approve them, that means we have them on the books. It does not mean that Northwest, the US Department of Education and Title 4 will agree with any of our decisions. December 1st the UT Board will step aside and say, Board of Trustees and institutions do what you want. We'll kind of sort through something in the spring. We may even work with Utah Tech, and maybe Weber and possibly UVU to put together a joint request to go to Northwest from four different institutions. The System Office can't work with Northwest directly. They're not members. All the institutions are members. So, our request has to come from our institutions to Northwest. I think they could say: Yes, we'll start another pilot. They could say: come back in three years when we have data. They could say: wait for the first year of data. We don't know where that will go. If at some point they said, yes, we would then have to go to the financial aid question which nobody's brought up yet. So, I think that's generally the timeline.

My prediction is, Northwest will wait 3 years or sometime there. They may wait 18 months and see what the data shows in terms of student performance. We

brought the discussion forth that we're pushing a degree program quickly. This is the discussion to say: we're gonna have the discussion and give everybody a heads-up and get on the same page.

Chris: Wondering if this is the canary in the coal mine on the new Board of Education on how they will do business. I don't know if anyone has more insight into that, but this does seem like a pretty radical change.

Jon Anderson: I'd love to hear the President's response to that. She's been at the Board meetings. I've watched them, and I think this is just the beginning

Mindy: This is how the new Board is tasked to run and that is why we have some business minded entrepreneurs on the board. There are few educators. I believe our governor is interested in disrupting higher ed and moving things forward and this is what the Board has been tasked with. And I think right now what you're seeing is a little bit of strategy trying to figure this out. This is how the Board is going to run. How responsive do we need to be versus ignoring the Board and hoping that we have some idea two years from now on how the Board's going to be? I think we're all playing a good game of chicken right now. We're honestly just trying to do our best to be responsive, but we're also not going to get ahead of accreditation and Federal funding. We will not put our students in jeopardy on those sorts of things, but we are being as responsive as we can be to be responsible and move things forward. And I think that's what everyone is trying to do right now. Stay tuned.

John Benedict: Is there a study on how the industry will accept this? On one hand, they might say: we can get them into the industry quicker. On the other hand, they might say: oh, yeah, they're missing some things that we used to see from other employees.

Jon Anderson: We have not – our best gauge is that the new Board of Higher Ed comes from industry and they are the ones pushing this.

Mindy: Amazon is starting to train their own employees because it's taking too long for them to get employees. People are getting frustrated with the system now – this is industry specific, not for every discipline.

Kelly: We should have some updates for you at our December 7th meeting. Please send me questions and thoughts and I will shoot those on.

9. Standing Committee Updates: (5:01)
 - a. Faculty Review Board (Daniel Eves)
 - b. Parking Ticket Arbitration Committee (Daniel Eves)
 - c. Staff Association (John Lisonbee)
 - d. General Education Committee (Ryan Siemers)

The Educated Persons Conference was well represented by SUU. There was the plenary discussion about the naming and framing of GE courses and how we can make sure students understand the value of these things. How can we make sure that students understand the importance of the general education courses that they're taking? I sort of do my own thing referring to Aristotle and raising questions about the good life. That might not be the approach that you all want to take. It would be helpful if students, and of course, people in the broader community, including various boards, understood the value of those sorts of things.

- e. University Curriculum Committee (Rachel Parker)
- f. Student Association (Alexis McIff)

Thank you for your contributions to the scholarship fund – Health Fair, Business Week, Co-ed Week, and College of Natural sciences week. Students are pretty burnt out and excited for Thanksgiving break – I just got a text from the academic vice president of UVU who was concerned with professors not getting back to students in a timely manner or not grading things, assigning homework over breaks or weekends. Just some timing things there. I haven't heard any complaints from our students, so please stay on top of this for our students. We sent out a survey (goal to get 3000 responses) to students about how they are feeling about the various spaces on campus, like the Student Center and if we need to do any kind of updates/remodels/revamps.

- g. Benefits Committee (Cody Bremner)

Meeting 11/30 – Morton consultants will be at the meeting

- h. Faculty Awards Committees:

- i. Distinguished Faculty Lecturer and Grace A. Tanner Committee (Christopher Graves)
- ii. Inclusion & Diversity Awards Committee (Kelly Goonan)
- iii. Outstanding and Distinguished Educator Award Committee (Bryan Koenig)

I wouldn't mind just saying something about the revisions that we were going to make for the Outstanding and Distinguished Educator award. And so all we really wanted to do was make it so that when people are looking at how to nominate somebody and provide supporting materials and that they knew what the evaluation criteria was because when we were evaluating them last year, it was kind of haphazard whether people happened to mention that kind of stuff. We just wanted them to be explicit in the nomination prompts so that we can get people's information just to make it a more fair evaluation across all the candidates. That's the main change we made, I think.

- iv. Distinguished Scholar/Creative Award Committee (Christian Bohnenstengel)
- v. Distinguished Faculty Service Award Committee (Andrew Misseldine)

- i. Treasurer's Report (Daniel Eves)
- j. Past President's Report (Abigail Larson) - Academic Affairs Committee; University Faculty Leaves Committee
Currently, no, but some things are coming in down the pipeline in the next year. There are a couple of policies, big policies up for review, so academic integrity and intellectual property. We're hoping to get out by the first meeting of next year. So I actually have been doing something this fall, even though you haven't really seen any fruits of my labor yet. Hopefully, that will be coming soon.
- k. President Elect's Report (Scott Knowles) – UCFSL; Workload and Faculty Salary Equity Committee (WaFSEC)
WaFSEC is working very diligently on two separate plans to really structure out how raises will work for faculty. When those are ready to present, they will come here.
- l. President's Report (Kelly Goonan) - Policy/Procedure Arbitration Committee; President's Council; Dean's Council
Responding to the Board of Educations request for the less than 120 credit proposal. SUU is not going to be diving head first into anything – we are being thoughtful. I have had some faculty reach out about some policy questions and concerns – one relating to the student grade appeal process. I will bring this to the Executive Committee to discuss and see if any of those policies are in need of updating. We also received a resolution from SUUSA about mid-semester feedback. We received that this week, and so that will be something else that the Executive Committee will discuss at our next meeting, which we will share with this group when we come back. Nothing much else to report. I apparently had a statewide rumor attributed to me. So thank you to whoever started that. I feel famous now. It was kind of fun to find out that Utah State University folks were telling James that I was saying things out of turn.

Please share the announcements and information items with your colleagues. We wanna make sure that we're getting information out but not overwhelming people either. I'll be sitting down to come up with some shared guidelines for how the faculty send it in the Provost office, share our information when folks reach out to us, and ask both of us to share that information. We don't want to overload faculty, but we also want to make sure that we're sharing information and being transparent and helping support that shared governance. System.

Provost Anderson asked for a moment to mention something about the Strategic Plan.

Jon Anderson: After 2 1/2 years the Strategic Plan is in its last form and will go to the President's Leadership Council. I invite all of you to read through that. It includes almost all of the elements that were reviewed with the Senate earlier,

some tweaks were made by Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. So metrics are in place. We're still finalizing, and then on to the Board of Trustees.

10. Call for Executive Session

11. Adjourn (5:12PM)