



DRAFT MINUTES

HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Monday, January 26, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. | 110 Senate Building

Members Present:

Sen. Ann Millner, Senate Chair
Rep. Karen M. Peterson, House Chair
Rep. Jill Koford, Vice Chair
Sen. John D. Johnson
Sen. Karen Kwan
Sen. Kathleen A. Riebe
Sen. Evan J. Vickers
Rep. Katy Hall
Rep. Sahara Hayes
Rep. Trevor Lee
Rep. Michael J. Petersen

Rep. Mark A. Strong
Rep. R. Neil Walter
Rep. Ryan D. Wilcox

Members Absent:

Sen. Keith Grover
Sen. Michael K. McKell
Sen. Chris H. Wilson

Staff Present:

Joseph Fitzgerald, Finance Officer
Ben Leishman, Finance Manager
Lorna Wells, Committee Secretary

Note: A copy of related materials and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes – January 22, 2026

Chair Karen Peterson called the meeting to order at 08:08 AM.

2. Southern Utah University Budget Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Southern Utah University (SUU).

[2a. Southern Utah University 26GS Budget Introduction](#)

Mindy Benson, President, SUU, introduced Landon Lee, student body president; who discussed some of his experiences at SUU.

Pres. Benson gave a presentation about SUU.

[2b. Southern Utah University 26GS Presentation](#)

Sen. Riebe asked how SUU is working to dispel the current negative opinions towards higher education. Pres. Benson responded.

Rep. Walter discussed the loss of head count in the USHE system and SUU's positive numbers. He asked why the trend at SUU is different than the state-wide system. Pres. Benson and Landon Lee responded.

Sen. Kwan congratulated Landon Lee on his presentation. She asked for more information about the aviation budget request. Pres. Benson responded.

Sen. Vickers discussed recent conversations with employees who are students at SUU to find out why they chose SUU.

Chair Karen Peterson mentioned her positive experiences at SUU. Pres. Benson commented.

MOTION: Rep. Wilcox moved to approve the minutes of the January 22, 2026 meeting. The motion passed with a vote of 13 - 0 - 4.

Yeas - 13

Rep. K. Hall
Rep. S. Hayes
Rep. J. Koford
Sen. K. Kwan
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. M. Petersen
Rep. K. Peterson
Sen. K. Riebe
Rep. M. Strong
Sen. E. Vickers
Rep. R. Walter
Rep. R. Wilcox

Nays - 0

Absent - 4

Sen. K. Grover
Sen. J. Johnson
Sen. M. McKell
Sen. C. Wilson

3. Snow College Budget Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald have a brief overview about Snow College.

[3a. Snow College 26GS Budget Introduction](#)

Stacee McIff, President, Snow College gave a presentation about the college.

[3b. Snow College 26GS Presentation](#)

Sen. Millner asked for more clarification about how rural students are supported. Pres. McIff responded.

Rep. Strong mentioned his personal connections to Snow College. He asked about the fund-raising opportunities at Snow College. Pres. McIff responded.

Chair Karen Peterson thanked Pres. McIff for the presentation.

4. Salt Lake Community College Budget Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Salt Lake Community College (SLCC).

[4a. Salt Lake Community College Budget Introduction](#)

Greg Peterson, President, Salt Lake gave a presentation about SLCC.

[4b. Salt Lake Community College 26GS Presentation](#)

Sen. Kwan mentioned the challenges for the Olympic athletes of training while being in school. She asked about the current system-wide student contact and notifications software. Pres. Peterson responded.

Sen. Kwan asked about the next steps to come into compliance for H.B. 261. Pres. Peterson responded.

Sen. Riebe mentioned the importance of the Columbus Community Center.

Sen. Millner asked how the new workforce PELL initiative will impact students at SLCC and how they are notified about this program. Pres. Peterson responded.

Sen. Millner mentioned the positive impacts of the emphasis of the technical college mission.

Chair Karen Peterson asked for more information about concurrent enrollment for technical education. Pres. Peterson responded.

5. Request for Appropriation - Extreme Behaviors Intervention Trial Program (Rep. Thompson)

Rep. Jason Thompson explained the Extreme Behaviors Intervention Trial Program funding request with the assistance of Tami Curtis, Clinical Assistant Professor of Social Work, Utah State University.

[5a. Extreme Behaviors Intervention Trial Program RFA](#)

[RFA - Extreme Behavior Intervention Proposal](#)

Rep. Wilcox expressed his personal knowledge of how often these extreme behaviors are happening in the classroom. He asked what the intervention would look like. Tami Curtis responded.

Sen. Riebe mentioned her own personal experiences with these situations. She expressed concern about training teachers who have a full classroom and about having part-time paraprofessionals. She would like the programs to be more robust. Rep. Jason Thompson and Tami Curtis responded.

Rep. Koford asked a clarifying question about the interns and mentioned the work with United Way in Ogden schools.

6. Request for Appropriation – SafeUT in Spanish (Sen. Balderree)

Sen. Heidi Balderree explained the funding request regarding SafeUT in Spanish.

[6a. SafeUT in Spanish RFA](#)

Sen. Kwan commented that the funding request is very minimal and expressed support for this request.

Rep. Michael Petersen asked about the current budget for SafeUT and why this small account cannot be just rolled into that budget. Sen. Balderree responded.

Chair Karen Peterson expressed appreciation to the individuals from the Commissioner's Office and Utah Board of Higher Education who attended the meeting.

MOTION: Sen. Millner moved to adjourn. The motion passed with a vote of 11 - 0 - 6.

Yeas - 11

Rep. K. Hall
Rep. S. Hayes
Sen. J. Johnson
Rep. J. Koford
Sen. K. Kwan
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. M. Petersen
Rep. K. Peterson
Rep. M. Strong
Sen. E. Vickers
Rep. R. Walter

Nays - 0

Absent - 6

Sen. K. Grover
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Sen. K. Riebe
Rep. R. Wilcox
Sen. C. Wilson

Chair Karen Peterson adjourned the meeting at 10:21 AM.