



DRAFT MINUTES

HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Wednesday, January 28, 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. Michael K. McKell
Sen. Kathleen A. Riebe
Sen. Evan J. Vickers
Rep. Katy Hall
Rep. Sahara Hayes
Rep. Michael J. Petersen

Rep. Mark A. Strong
Rep. R. Neil Walter

Members Absent:

Sen. Keith Grover
Sen. Chris H. Wilson
Rep. Trevor Lee
Rep. Ryan D. Wilcox

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

Chair Millner called the meeting to order at 08:04 AM.

Chair Millner thanked individuals from the Commissioner's Office and the Utah Board of Higher Education who were in attendance.

MOTION: Rep. Karen Peterson moved to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2026 meeting. The motion passed with a vote of 6 - 0 - 11.

Yeas - 6

Rep. J. Koford
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. M. Petersen
Rep. K. Peterson
Sen. E. Vickers
Rep. R. Walter

Nays - 0

Absent - 11

Sen. K. Grover
Rep. K. Hall
Rep. S. Hayes
Sen. J. Johnson
Sen. K. Kwan
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Sen. K. Riebe
Rep. M. Strong
Rep. R. Wilcox
Sen. C. Wilson

2. Utah Tech University Budget Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Utah Tech University (UT).

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

Shane Smeed, President, UT, gave a presentation about the university with the assistance of Brad Last, Special Assistant to the President for Government and Community Relations.

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

Rep. Walter expressed appreciation to Pres. Smeed for his great work at the university.

Rep. Karen Peterson asked a question about the decline in enrollment of male students. Pres. Smeed responded.

Chair Millner thanked Pres. Smeed for his presentation.

3. Weber State University Budget Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Weber State University (WSU).

[**3a. Weber State University Budget Introduction 26GS**](#)

Chair Millner welcomed Leslie Durham who became the Interim President for WSU after only being at the university for three months.

Leslie Durham, Interim President, Weber State University, gave a presentation about the university.

[**3b. Weber State University Presentation 26GS**](#)

Quintin Ulrich, student intern at the MARS lab, shared his experiences at WSU.

Interim Pres. Durham continued the presentation.

Sen. McKell expressed concern about the completion rates in the dual-mission institutions. He expressed support for the funding request for the tuition differential. Interim Pres. Durham continued the presentation.

Rep. Koford thanked Interim Pres. Durham for her leadership.

[**3b. Weber State University Presentation 26GS**](#)

Chair Millner expressed appreciation for the great leadership in such a short time.

4. Dixie Technical College Budget Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Dixie Technical College.

[**4a. Dixie Technical College Budget Introduction 26GS**](#)

Jordan Rushton, President, Dixie Technical College gave a presentation about the college.

[**4b. Dixie Technical College Presentation 26GS**](#)

Rep. Strong asked for clarification about the male and female enrollment count. Pres. Rushton responded.

Chair Millner thanked Pres. Rushton for the great collaboration and partnerships in their region. She asked what fields may be emerging in the next five years in the Washington County area. Pres. Rushton responded.

5. Southwest Technical College Budget Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Southwest Technical College.

[**5a. Southwest Technical College Budget Introduction 26GS**](#)

Brennan Wood, President, Southwest Technical College gave a presentation about the college.

[5b. Southwest Technical College Presentation 26GS](#)

Rep. Koford mentioned the need for excellent tradespeople.

Sen. Vickers mentioned the partnership with Southern Utah University nursing pathways. Pres. Wood responded.

Chair Millner expressed appreciation for being such a great role model for the partnership.

MOTION: Rep. Karen Peterson 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
Sen. K. Riebe
Sen. E. Vickers
Rep. R. Walter

Nays - 0

Absent - 6

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

Chair Millner adjourned the meeting at 09:56 AM.