



MINUTES

HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Tuesday, February 3, 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 30, 2026

Chair Millner called the meeting to order at 08:01 AM.

Chair Millner welcomed students from the Leavitt Center for Politics and Public Service at SUU.

MOTION: Rep. Karen Peterson moved to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2026 meeting. The motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0 - 10.

Yeas - 7

Rep. S. Hayes
Sen. J. Johnson
Rep. J. Koford
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. M. Petersen
Rep. K. Peterson
Sen. E. Vickers

Nays - 0

Absent - 10

Sen. K. Grover
Rep. K. Hall
Sen. K. Kwan
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Sen. K. Riebe
Rep. M. Strong
Rep. R. Walter
Rep. R. Wilcox
Sen. C. Wilson

2. Bridgerland Technical College Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Bridgerland Technical College.

[2a. Bridgerland Technical College Budget Introduction 26GS](#)

Lisa Moon, Executive Vice President and Chief Instructional Officer gave a presentation about the college. She introduced Brandi Gittins, Vice President for Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer.

[2b. Bridgerland Technical College Presentation 26GS](#)

Rep. Karen Peterson commented on the increase in the number of graduates. Lisa Moon responded.

Rep. Michael Petersen mentioned his personal experiences with Bridgerland Technical College. Lisa Moon responded.

Chair Millner thanked Lisa Moon for the presentation and expressed appreciation for their great work.

3. Ogden-Weber Technical College Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Ogden-Weber Technical College.

[3a. Ogden-Weber Technical College Budget Introduction 26GS](#)

James Taggart, President, Ogden-Weber Technical College, gave a presentation about the college.

[3b. Ogden-Weber Technical College Presentation 26GS](#)

Sen. Riebe commended the USHE system on the great collaboration for facilitating many pathways among institutions. Pres. Taggart thanked Sen. Riebe for her comments. He introduced Chad Burchell, Vice President for Instructional Services

Chair Millner mentioned the significant enrollment growth. Pre. Taggart responded.

Rep. Wilcox mentioned non-traditional students at the technical colleges and asked about demographics about students who are looking at a second career. He also asked about funding for these students. Pres. Taggart responded.

Rep. Koford asked about the reduction in the number of people on wait lists. Pres. Taggart responded.

Chair Millner asked some questions about the new building scheduled for completion in 2028. Pres. Taggart responded.

4. Mountainland Technical College Presentation

Joseph Fitzgerald gave a brief overview about Mountainland Technical College.

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

Clay Christensen, President, Mountainland Technical College gave a presentation about the college.

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

Chair Millner asked for clarification about the policy framework and accountability with the current shift to capacity funding. Pres. Christensen responded.

Chair Millner asked about the possibility of a reallocation process for the technical colleges similar to the reallocation for the other degree-granting institutions. Pres. Christensen responded.

Sen. Riebe mentioned that a reallocation process would be very disruptive to the technical colleges.

Sen. Johnson expressed appreciation for the work of the technical colleges. He mentioned the challenges of the current budget shortfalls. He mentioned the importance of being responsible with tax-payer dollars. Pres. Christensen responded.

5. Talent Ready Utah Presentation

Vic Hockett, Associate Commissioner of Talent Ready Utah, gave a presentation about Talent Ready Utah.

[5a. Talent Ready Utah Presentation 26GS](#)

Jimmy McDonough, Assistant Commissioner of Education Workforce Program, discussed the Engineering and Computer Science Initiative.

Sen. Johnson expressed concern about the speed at which technology is changing and how to keep up with AI and other advances. Vic Hockett and Jimmy McDonough responded.

Jordan Hill Assistant Commissioner for Industry Workforce Initiatives, discussed the Custom Fit program.

Jeorgi Bernard, recent Tech Moms program graduate, shared some of her experiences in the program.

Trina Limpert, Co-Founder, Tech-Moms, discussed the Tech-Moms initiative.

Rep. Karen Peterson assumed the chair.

Sen. Kwan commended Jeorgi on her success in the Tech-Moms program. She asked whether men were involved. Trina Limpert responded.

6. Request for Appropriation - American Legion Boys and Girls State at Weber State University (Rep. Koford)

Rep. Koford explained the funding request with the assistance of Terry Schow, Legislative Chair, American Legion National Executive Committee with Utah Boys and Girls State introduced this funding request.

[RFA - American Legion Utah Boys State](#)

Doug Case, President, Utah Boys State discussed the Utah Boys State program sponsored by the American Legion.

[8a. American Legion Boys and Girls State at Weber State University RFA](#)

[RFA - American Legion Utah Girls State](#)

Cary Fisher, Executive Director, American Legion Auxiliary, discussed the Utah Girls State program sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary.

Michelle McCullough, past Girls' State Governor and Director, shared some of her experiences at Girls State.

Rep. Koford explained that due to the shortness of time, Cindy Clawson, a recent graduate would not speak today,

Sen. Johnson expressed support and commented on his own experiences with Boys State.

Rep. Walter discussed shared his own experience and that of his father at Boys State.

Sen. Kwan asked for clarification about the funding request for both Girls State and Boys State. Rep. Koford responded.

7. 9:25 a.m. Request for Appropriation - Tanner's Program for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities (Rep. Dailey-Provost)

Rep. Jennifer Dailey-Provost explained this funding request with the assistance of MaryAnn Lee, Artistic Director, University of Utah's Tanner Dance Program

[6a. Tanner's Program for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities RFA](#)

Rep. Hayes expressed support for this funding request.

8. Request for Appropriation - University of Utah Center for Medical Cannabis Research (Rep. Dailey-Provost)

Rep. Jennifer Dailey-Provost explained this funding request.

[7a. University of Utah Center for Medical Cannabis Research RFA](#)

9. Request for Appropriation - Teaching Academy Para-professional Model Trial (Rep. Thompson)

Rep. Jason Thompson explained this funding request with the assistance of Frank Schofield, Superintendent, Logan School District.

[9a. Teaching Academy Para-professional Model Trial RFA](#)

[9b. Teaching Academy Para-professional Model Trial Handout](#)

Sen. Kwan asked for clarification about how many individuals the funding request would support. Frank Schofield responded.

10. Other Business

Chair Karen Peterson stated that the next meeting will be held at the University of Utah and explained where committee members and the public should park.

MOTION: Rep. Wilcox moved to adjourn at 10:23 AM. The motion passed with a vote of 10 - 0 - 7.

Yeas - 10

Rep. K. Hall
Rep. S. Hayes
Sen. K. Kwan
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. K. Peterson
Sen. K. Riebe
Rep. M. Strong
Rep. R. Walter
Rep. R. Wilcox

Nays - 0

Absent - 7

Sen. K. Grover
Sen. J. Johnson
Rep. J. Koford
Sen. M. McKell
Rep. M. Petersen
Sen. E. Vickers
Sen. C. Wilson

Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 10:25 a.m.