



DRAFT MINUTES

HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 11, 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
Sen. Chris H. Wilson
Rep. Katy Hall
Rep. Sahara Hayes
Rep. Michael J. Petersen

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

Members Absent:

Sen. Keith Grover
Sen. Michael K. McKell
Rep. Trevor Lee
Rep. Ryan D. Wilcox

Staff Present:

Joseph Fitzgerald, Finance Officer
Ben Leishman, Finance Manager
Calvin Cruz, 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 - February 9, 2026

Chair Karen Peterson called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Chair Karen Peterson thanked the staff, the Commissioner's Office, the USHE institutions, and committee members for all of their work.

Sen. Riebe and Sen Kwan thanked the chairs for their tireless work.

MOTION: Rep. Strong moved to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2026 meeting. The motion passed with a vote of 11 - 0 - 6.

Yeas - 11

Rep. K. Hall
Rep. J. Koford
Sen. K. Kwan
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. M. Petersen
Rep. K. Peterson
Sen. K. Riebe
Rep. M. Strong
Sen. E. Vickers
Rep. R. Walter
Sen. C. Wilson

Nays - 0

Absent - 6

Sen. K. Grover
Rep. S. Hayes
Sen. J. Johnson
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Rep. R. Wilcox

MOTION: Sen. Miller moved to approve the following: a. The Tuition Adjustments as listed on page 3 of the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee 2026GS Motions Packet to reflect actual anticipated tuition collections. b. The Vehicle Expansion Request as listed on page 4 of the packet. c. The revenue neutral Internal Reallocations as listed on pages 5-9 of the packet. d. The intent language listed in page 10 of the packet. The motion passed with a vote of 12 - 0 - 5.

Yeas - 12

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

Nays - 0

Absent - 5

Sen. K. Grover
Sen. J. Johnson
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Rep. R. Wilcox

MOTION: Rep. Koford moved to approve the Reductions list found on page 11 of the packet and forward it on to the Executive Appropriations Committee for their consideration. The motion passed with a vote of 12 - 0 - 5.

Yeas - 12

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

Nays - 0

Absent - 5

Sen. K. Grover
Sen. J. Johnson
Sen. K. Kwan
Sen. M. McKell
Rep. R. Wilcox

MOTION: Sen. Millner moved approve the Set Asides and Funding Requests Prioritization lists found on pages 12-13 of this packet and forward them on to the Executive Appropriations Committee for their consideration.

Sen. Kwan asked a clarification about Item #15. Chair Karen Peterson responded.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Rep. Walter moved to approve the Set Asides and Funding Requests Prioritization lists found on pages 12-13 of this packet and forward them on to the Executive Appropriations Committee for their consideration with one amendment--to change the Higher Education research funding pilot program from \$50 million one time to \$20 million one time.

Sen. Kwan asked a clarifying question about the proposed reductions. Chair Karen Peterson responded. Sen. Kwan then spoke against the substitute motion.

Sen. Wilson stated that the original request has been cut by \$50 million and spoke against the substitute motion.

Sen. Millner mentioned the compromise between the House and Senate and that this request should be a high-priority going to EAC. She spoke against the substitute motion.

Rep. Michael Petersen spoke in favor of the substitute motion. He mentioned that this request would be too much to ask of the citizens of Utah.

Rep. Walter made some additional comments regarding the motion.

Rep. Walter's substitute motion failed with a vote of 7 - 6 - 4.

Yeas - 7

Rep. K. Hall
Rep. S. Hayes
Rep. J. Koford
Rep. M. Petersen
Rep. K. Peterson
Rep. M. Strong
Rep. R. Walter

Nays - 6

Sen. J. Johnson
Sen. K. Kwan
Sen. A. Millner
Sen. K. Riebe
Sen. E. Vickers
Sen. C. Wilson

Absent - 4

Sen. K. Grover
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Rep. R. Wilcox

Sen. Millner gave some additional remarks regarding her original motion.

Sen. Millner's original motion failed with a vote of 9 - 4 - 4.

Yeas - 9

Rep. S. Hayes
Sen. J. Johnson
Rep. J. Koford
Sen. K. Kwan
Sen. A. Millner
Rep. K. Peterson
Sen. K. Riebe
Sen. E. Vickers
Sen. C. Wilson

Nays - 4

Rep. K. Hall
Rep. M. Petersen
Rep. M. Strong
Rep. R. Walter

Absent - 4

Sen. K. Grover
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Rep. R. Wilcox

MOTION: Sen. Vickers moved to approve the Set Asides and Funding Requests Prioritization lists found on pages 12-13 of this packet and forward them on to the Executive Appropriations Committee for their consideration with one amendment--to change the Higher Education research funding pilot program from \$50 million one time to \$35 million one time.

Rep. Walter supported the motion.

Rep. Strong asked a clarifying question about the process if a priority list is not submitted to EAC. Chair Karen Peterson and Sen. Millner responded.

Sen. Kwan commented on the motion.

Sen. Vickers motion passed with a vote of 9 - 4 - 4.

Yeas - 9

Rep. S. Hayes
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 - 4

Rep. K. Hall
Sen. J. Johnson
Rep. M. Strong
Sen. C. Wilson

Absent - 4

Sen. K. Grover
Rep. T. Lee
Sen. M. McKell
Rep. R. Wilcox

MOTION: Rep. Michael Petersen moved to adjourn.

Chair Karen Peterson adjourned the meeting at 8:30 a.m.