

MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE UTAH STATE BOARD OF REGENTS
SNOW COLLEGE, EPHRAIM, UTAH
AND BY CONFERENCE CALL
OCTOBER 18, 2001

Regents Participating

Charles E. Johnson, Chair
Pamela J. Atkinson, Vice Chair
Jerry C. Atkin
Daryl C. Barrett
David J. Grant (Member, Presidential Search Committee)
L. Brent Hoggan
James S. Jardine
Michael R. Jensen (Chair, Presidential Search Committee)
Nolan E. Karras
E. George Mantes
Sara V. Sinclair
Marlon O. Snow
Maria Sweeten

Regents Excused

Linnea S. Barney
Kim R. Burningham
David J. Jordan
John B. Norman, Jr.
Jed H. Pitcher

Office of the Commissioner

Cecelia H. Foxley, Commissioner
David Buhler, Associate Commissioner for Public Relations
Joyce Cottrell, Executive Secretary
Phyllis C. Safman, Assistant Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Norm Tarbox, Associate Commissioner for Finance and Facilities

Institutional Presidents

Steven D. Bennion, Southern Utah University
Rick Wheeler, Snow College
H. Lynn Cundiff, Salt Lake Community College

Representatives of the Media

Greg Dart, *Messenger Enterprise/Snowdrift*
Larry Masco, MKTI-KLGL Radio
Kirsten Stewart, *Salt Lake Tribune*

Both campuses and all student organizations were represented. A complete list of those present is on file in the Commissioner's Office.

Chair Charles E. Johnson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone and asked Secretary Cottrell to call the roll. Having established the required quorum, Chair Johnson said the Regents were very excited to be on the Snow College Campus to select a new President. He welcomed Senator Leonard Blackham, Mayor Gary Anderson, and other elected officials. He explained that the term of the new President would not begin until January 1, so Interim President Wheeler will continue to act as President through the remainder of this year. Chair Johnson paid tribute to President Wheeler's great leadership and to Vice President White's many contributions to the College.

Chair Johnson introduced Regent Jensen, who chaired the Presidential Search Committee. Regent Jensen recalled that his grandfather had ridden a horse, and later a motorcycle, from Ferren to Ephraim to attend college. That was a good example of the determination and perseverance of Snow College graduates. Regent Jensen introduced the members of the search committee, several of whom were in attendance, and thanked them for their dedication and hard work.

Regent Jensen explained the search process: Six months ago the committee met with various constituent groups representing faculty, staff, students, and the community at both the Ephraim and Richfield campuses. He said he had expected a lot of input from those meetings, and he was not disappointed. During the course of the search, a total of 79 candidates were considered. The committee reviewed each candidate's file and identified semifinalists to be interviewed. From those interviews, the committee selected a smaller group of finalists whose names were forwarded to the Board of Regents to be interviewed.

Regent Jensen nominated Michael T. Benson to be the next President of Snow College. Regent Grant seconded the nomination. Vote was taken by roll call, and the motion carried unanimously.

The formal meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m., after which Chair Johnson gave the Snow Campus community an opportunity to meet their new President.

He introduced Mike and Celia Benson and their children, Emma and Samuel. The Bensons were greeted with a warm round of applause. Chair Johnson said Dr. Benson was a BYU graduate who had obtained his Ph.D. at Oxford University. He has written books and is considered an expert on former US President Harry S. Truman. He has proven to be an excellent fund raiser, which is a vital necessity in a President. Chair Johnson said the Regents greatly appreciate the funding which is appropriated by the Utah State Legislature, but there is always a need for more money. Dr. Benson has done an excellent job at the University of Utah, where he presently serves as an Executive

Assistant to President Machen and Secretary to the University and Board of Trustees. Dr. Benson loves students and is very good with people. He has proven to be skillful in working with the Legislature and Governor. Mrs. Benson also has an international background.

Dr. Benson introduced himself by recalling the time in 1998 when he had been asked by a Jewish Cultural Center in Los Angeles to speak at the opening of an exhibit commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. More than 400 people were present. The rabbi began his introduction by telling the assemblage, "You will ask yourself, when did they start awarding doctorates to 12-year-olds?" Dr. Benson related that on their way to Ephraim that afternoon, his family had been stopped in Mount Pleasant for a speeding violation. He told the patrolman that he was in a hurry to get to Ephraim because he was going to be named the new President of Snow College. Since he received only a warning, he said he and his family already had warm feelings for Sanpete County.

Dr. Benson said he had done a lot of research on Snow College and had found the phrase "Spirit of Snow" to be a recurring theme. He and his family were very proud to be welcomed into the larger Snow family. He said it was not the appropriate occasion for him to outline his vision for the College, but he promised to listen to the concerns of Snow constituents, and to work very hard. He said he has tried to follow the wise counsel of LDS President Gordon B. Hinckley, who once said, "There is no better attribute than the ability to discipline oneself to work – to get up in the morning and get after it, and to stay after it until the job is done." He also read a line from a letter John Adams had written to his son, John Quincy Adams, when he was away at college: "You will ever remain that all the end of study is to make you a good man and a useful citizen. This will ever be the sum total of the advice of your affectionate father."

President Benson reviewed the threefold mission of Snow College: "To educate students, inspire them to love learning, and lead them to serve others." He pledged to bring enthusiasm, vision and lots of hard work to Snow College, and together there would be "lots of fun along the way."

Celia Benson introduced Emma and Samuel to the crowd. She said she and her husband were very excited the previous day to be nominated for this position, but they were even more excited today because it was the first time either of them had ever got out of a speeding ticket! She recognized the hard work which is a tradition of Snow College. She said she and her husband were eager to serve and hoped to make a difference. The family had visited the Ephraim College the previous weekend during Homecoming and decided it would be a wonderful place to raise their family. Even the children loved the town.

Commissioner Foxley said the Regents agree that their very most important job is appointing new Presidents to lead the institutions. They take that job very seriously. The Regents received input from the search committee and determined who would be the best match to lead this institution

to the next level of excellence. She commended the search committee for their excellent work and said it had been a pleasure working with them. She said she was excited to see an institution welcome a new leader and still appreciate the leadership of the current administration.

Interim President Wheeler and his assistant, Marci Larsen, presented the children with a basket of Snow College toys and Snow sweatsuits. They also presented a gift basket and a bouquet of flowers to Dr. and Mrs. Benson.

Commissioner Foxley thanked all of the Snow College family for their hospitality. She paid tribute to Interim President Wheeler for his excellent leadership this year. President Wheeler thanked the Search Committee and everyone involved in the search process for handling the search in a confidential, professional manner. He thanked the Snow College family for their support and enthusiasm and pledged to make the transition successful.

Everyone was invited to greet the Bensons.

Joyce Cottrell CPS
Executive Secretary

Date Approved