



Committee on Democratic Civic Engagement

Senate of the Associated Students, 93rd Session
Agenda for Tuesday, February 17th, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Joe Crowley Student Union, 4th floor, Room 406, 1664 North Virginia St.,
Reno, NV 89557

Zoom link:

<https://unr.zoom.us/j/84899948085?pwd=jWlNQmB3DrxEq5NLiyMgUSqBuVnEKW.1>

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

2. **COMPLIANCE WITH NEVADA OPEN MEETING LAW**

- a. Was the agenda posted three full working days by 9 am, not including the meeting date?
 - i. <https://nevadaasun.com/meetings/committee-on-democratic-civic-engagement-11/>
- b. Is the meeting taking place on the day of the week, month, day, year, at the time and location listed on the agenda?
- c. Is the Zoom link working and available to the public?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, this meeting must be ENDED IMMEDIATELY unless NOML covers a legitimate correction.

3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

“We acknowledge that the University of Nevada, Reno is situated on the traditional homelands of the Numu (Northern Paiute), Wašiw (Washoe), Newe (Western Shoshone), Nuwu (Southern Paiute) peoples. These lands continue to be a gathering place for

Posted at the ASUN Offices in the Joe Crowley Student Union, Frandsen Humanities Building, the Pennington Student Achievement Center, the Mathewson IGT Knowledge Center, and online at www.nevadaasun.com. ASUN supports providing equal access to all programs for people with disabilities. Reasonable efforts will be made to assist and accommodate persons with physical disabilities who wish to attend the meeting. Please call ASUN at (775) 784-6589 in advance so that arrangements can be made conveniently. If you would like a copy of any of the agenda items listed, please contact Senator Jason Issa at senatorIssa@asun.unr.edu.

Indigenous Peoples and we recognize their deep connections to these places. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on their territory.”

4. ROLL CALL

The Secretary must list roll call.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (INFORMATION ONLY)

Items heard under public comment may be for items either on or off the agenda. Action may not be taken on items raised under public comment. The Chair may elect to take public comment on actions on this agenda. The Chair may impose reasonable limits on the length of time members of the public may speak.

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

- a. 02/03/2026

7. AUDIO OR MINUTES MISSING FOR PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THIS BODY THAT DO NOT MEET 30 DAY POSTING OF NEVADA OPEN MEETING LAW

Minutes or audio files for previous meetings that are missing must be listed here with the date of each meeting.

8. REPORTS (INFORMATION ONLY)

- a. Report from the Director of Government Affairs, Isabelle Hatch
- b. Committee member reports
 - i. Chair Issa — Coordinator of Democratic Engagement and Special Events
 - ii. Vice Chair Radtke — Department of Government Affairs
 - iii. Senator Barrus — Coordinator of Student Engagement Outreach
 - iv. Senator Burrows — Office of Community-Engaged Learning & Leadership
 - v. Senator Castro — President’s Office of Government Relations and Community Engagement
 - vi. Senator Dayton — Associate Director of Student Engagement
 - vii. Senator Evans — Department of Campus and Public Relations
 - viii. Senator Saporito — Veterans Services

9. OLD BUSINESS (INFORMATION ONLY/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION/FOR POSSIBLE CORRECTIVE ACTION)

There is no old business to be discussed at this time.

10. NEW BUSINESS (INFORMATION ONLY/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

- a. S.J.R. 93 - A Joint Resolution in Support of Affirming the Value of “Non-Professional Degrees”

11. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

- a. Liaison changes and additions

12. PUBLIC COMMENT (INFORMATION ONLY)

Items heard under public comment may be for items either on or off the agenda. Action may not be taken on items raised under public comment. The Chair may elect to take public comment on actions on this agenda. The Chair may impose reasonable limits on the length of time members of the public may speak.

13. ADJOURNMENT

NOTES:

Agenda items may be considered out of order at the discretion of the Chair. The committee may combine two or more agenda items for consideration. The Committee may remove an item from the agenda or delay discussion of an item at any time.



Committee on Democratic Civic Engagement

Senate of the Associated Students, 93rd Session
Agenda for Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026 at 7:30 PM
Joe Crowley Student Union, 4th floor, Room 406, 1664 North Virginia St.,
Reno, NV 89557

Zoom link:

<https://unr.zoom.us/j/84899948085?pwd=jWlNQmB3DrxEq5NLiyMgUSqBuVnEKW.1>

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

7:31 pm

2. **COMPLIANCE WITH NEVADA OPEN MEETING LAW**

- a. Was the agenda posted three full working days by 9 am, not including the meeting date? Yes
 - i. <https://nevadaasun.com/meetings/committee-on-democratic-civic-engagement-10/>
- b. Is the meeting taking place on the day of the week, month, day, year, at the time and location listed on the agenda? Yes
- c. Is the Zoom link working and available to the public? Yes

If the answer to any of these questions is no, this meeting must be ENDED IMMEDIATELY unless NOML covers a legitimate correction.

3. **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

“We acknowledge that the University of Nevada, Reno is situated on the traditional homelands of the Numu (Northern Paiute), Wašiw (Washoe), Newe (Western Shoshone), Nuwu (Southern Paiute) peoples. These lands continue to be a gathering place for

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Indigenous Peoples and we recognize their deep connections to these places. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on their territory.”

4. ROLL CALL

The Secretary must list roll call.

- i. Chair Issa- Present
- ii. Vice Chair Radtke- Present
- iii. Senator Barrus-Present
- iv. Senator Burrows-Present
- v. Senator Castro- Present
- vi. Senator Dayton- Present
- vii. Senator Evans- Present
- viii. Senator Saporito- Present

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (INFORMATION ONLY)

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- Graig Hoffman- pbw student
- Thursday, Feb 3- student renter workshop

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

- a. 12/05/2025- So moved by Senator Evan
- b. Seconded by Senator Barrus

7. AUDIO OR MINUTES MISSING FOR PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF THIS BODY THAT DO NOT MEET 30 DAY POSTING OF NEVADA OPEN MEETING LAW

Minutes or audio files for previous meetings that are missing must be listed here with the date of each meeting.

8. REPORTS (INFORMATION ONLY)

- a. Report from the Director of Government Affairs, Isabelle Hatch
- b. Committee member reports-
 - Meet with Aglubat and Atencio- chancellor listening session at 2 pm
 - Senators- reach out to come up with funding mechanisms for millennium scholarship- money per hour
 - Department meeting bi-weekly- PCR, times are available by reaching out
 - Youth in the community- Daley
 - Interviews for the assistant director position
- i. Chair Issa-

- Liaison positions- roles are open, whoever will hold positions will work with Senator Dyaton
 - Add to more liaison positions- Washoe County registered voters and the Office of Admissions and Records- voting resources
 - Senator Dayton asked if there are liaison positions in ASA
 - Senator Castro asked if they were the same contacts
 - Chair Issa said that they are different contacts- Mathew Little (O-slice)
 - No questions
- ii. Vice Chair Radtke — Department of Government Affairs
 - Senator Radtke has been meeting with Director Hatch bi-weekly
 - iii. Senator Barrus — Coordinator of Student Engagement Outreach
 - no report
 - iv. Senator Burrows
 - No report
 - v. Senator Castro — President's Office of Government Relations and Community Engagement
 - Chair Issa asked if Austin Daley had connected with individuals
 - Senator Castro says he doesn't have a tap on the student body, connect with students with personal questions
 - vi. Senator Dayton — Associate Director of Student Engagement
 - MLK- Boys and Girls Club, support the new ADA-compliant pack rides vehicle
 - Chair Issa said the quote is \$8600, originally had it \$2500/2600
 - vii. Senator Evans — Department of Campus and Public Relations
 - Talking to Director Mendoza- Lab coat initiative
 - Senator Villa donated lab coats
 - viii. Senator Saporito — Veterans Services
 - Chi and John- Veterans services- plan another event
 - Senator Castro asked if he would help with another organizations
 - Senator Saporito will look into it further

9. OLD BUSINESS (INFORMATION ONLY/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION/FOR POSSIBLE CORRECTIVE ACTION)

There is no old business to be discussed at this time.

10. NEW BUSINESS (INFORMATION ONLY/FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

- a. Liaison adoptions
 - i. Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement

- Senator Burrow motioned to make herself the liaison for the Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement
- Seconded by Senator Barrus
- ii. Coordinator of Democratic Engagement and Special Events
 - Chair Issa moved to place himself as the liaison
 - Seconded by Senator Castro

11. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION)

- a. Liaison changes and additions
 - None

12. PUBLIC COMMENT (INFORMATION ONLY)

Items heard under public comment may be for items either on or off the agenda. Action may not be taken on items raised under public comment. The Chair may elect to take public comment on actions on this agenda. The Chair may impose reasonable limits on the length of time members of the public may speak.

- None

13. ADJOURNMENT

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- 7:50 pm

[DISCUSSION DRAFT]

93rd SESSION
2025-2026

**S. J. R. 93-
A JOINT RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT
OF AFFIRMING THE VALUE “NON-
PROFESSIONAL DEGREES”**

IN THE SENATE OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS

DECEMBER 3RD, 2025

SUBMITTED TO THE SENATE OF THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS AND AUTHORED BY SENATOR
BARRUS AND SENATOR SAPORITO
CO-AUTHORED BY SENATOR RADTKE, SENATOR CASTRO, SENATOR ATKINSON, SENATOR
HOANG, AND SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE MOSS
CO-SPONSORED BY SENATOR VILLA, PARLIAMENTARIAN ISSA, SENATOR DEBARGER, SENATOR
EVANS, SENATOR BURROWS AND SENATOR DAYTON

**A Resolution in Support of Affirming the Value “Non-Professional
Degrees”**

1 *Whereas*, the Department of Education’s 2025 negotiated-rule making and proposals narrowed
2 which graduate programs qualify as “professional degrees,” explicitly keeping 11 fields¹ and using
3 criteria like doctoral-level status, a minimum of six years of post-secondary instruction (including at
4 least two post-baccalaureate years);

¹ The 11 fields are as follows: Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Optometry, Law, Veterinary medicine, Osteopathic medicine, Podiatry, Chiropractic, Theology, and Clinical psychology.

5 *Whereas*, the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 aimed at increasing educational
6 opportunities through providing financial assistance to students in post-secondary education²;

7 *Whereas*, the HEA developed a list of professional degrees that clarified which programs would
8 be verified for additional graduate financial aid;

9 *Whereas*, the list of professional degrees mentioned in the act served as non-exclusionary in
10 nature, as it would take far too long to list every department that would be applicable with the
11 legislation;

12 *Whereas*, H.R.4137, the 2007 Higher Education Opportunity Act³ had offered Loan Forgiveness
13 and other forms of Federal Assistance to the programs that are deemed to be “unprofessional” as of
14 2025;

15 *Whereas*, H.R. 4137 served to update, modernize, and expand the HEA to ensure the equal
16 opportunity of American citizens within the 21st century;

17 *Whereas*, measures were brought in with the intention of creating a "new and simplified"
18 Repayment Assistance Plan, annual loans for new borrowers were capped at \$20,500 for graduate
19 students and \$50,000 for professional students⁴;

20 *Whereas*, the Department of Education (DOE) changed the definition of what counted as a
21 professional program, and therefore eligible for the \$200,000 aggregate limit available for
22 professional students⁵;

23 *Whereas*, programs and departments related to Public Health, Social Work, Education, Speech
24 Pathology and Audiology, and Accounting could restrict students’ access to federal loan limits,
25 making education less accessible and affordable;

² [Text - H.R.9567 - 89th Congress \(1965-1966\): Higher Education Act of 1965](#)

³ [Text - H.R.4137 - 110th Congress \(2007-2008\): Higher Education Opportunity Act](#)

⁴ [Nursing is no longer counted as a 'professional degree' by Trump admin - Newsweek](#)

⁵ [Annual and Aggregate Loan Limits | 2025-2026 Federal Student Aid Handbook](#)

Whereas, this decision has significant implications for many undergraduate and graduate students nation-wide and at the University alike, forcefully shifting millions of American citizens into an unwarranted and unprecedented economic threshold;

Whereas, this policy initiative will detrimentally affect new generations of scholars who have already spent hundreds of hours in their desired work fields;

Whereas, previous reductions in need-based aid, college access programs, and campus support services already detrimentally increase the risk of non-completion⁶;

Whereas, many students often lack financial, social, and academic support systems that are critical to college success;

Whereas, First-generation college students, many of whom come from low-income families or communities of color, are uniquely vulnerable;

SEC. 1. NURSING

Whereas, the largest health care occupation⁷ are registered nurses, with over 2.4 million workers, followed by nursing, psychiatric and home health aides (1.2 million). Women make up more than 85% of workers in both large occupations⁸;

Whereas, at the University of Nevada – Reno, the Orvis School of Nursing has 150-200 students enrolled at any given time,

Whereas, this program has graduated 240 students between Spring 2023 and Fall 2025;

Whereas, nursing students are employed within three months of graduation, entering quickly into the workforce to support our Nevada community;

Whereas, cutting financial support for these programs has huge implications for Nevada's advanced nursing workforce, as this limits access to federal financial aid weakens the workforce by reducing who can enter;

⁶ [June 4, 2025 Hearing entitled "Examining Policies and Priorities of the Department of Education"](#)

⁷ [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Healthcare Occupations & Occupational Handbook](#)

⁸ [U.S. Census Bureau: National Statistics on Women Employed in Health-Care Jobs](#)

Whereas, cutting down the nursing pipeline can undermine national goals to expand a diverse, highly educated nursing workforce capable of meeting growing population needs;

SEC. 2. PUBLIC HEALTH

Whereas, the most common sector that offers Public Health programs are Public, 4-year or above institutions (i.e. 27,306 completions as of 2023)⁹;

Whereas, the University of Nevada-Reno awarded 407 degrees in 2023;

Whereas, long-standing recognition as professional degrees within public health are essential to community health, emergency preparedness, and prevention;

Whereas, if finalized, this could significantly increase the cost of obtaining a public health degree, as well as further straining the workforce by staff shortages, rising chronic diseases, climate-related events, global migration shifts, and ongoing spread of misinformation¹⁰;

SEC. 3. SOCIAL WORK

Whereas, the most common sector that offers Social Work programs are Public, 4-year or above institutions (i.e. 38,528 completions as of 2023)¹¹;

Whereas, the University of Nevada-Reno awarded 297 degrees in 2023;

Whereas, declassifying BSW, MSW, and DSW as professional degrees will reduce access to social work education, increasing the dependency on high-interest loans and create a decline in enrollment in social work education¹²;

Whereas, the BSW program at UNR has had a 14.7% increase in enrollment (2020);

Whereas, 55% of BSW students are POC and 86% are female, classifying it as the most diverse program at the University;

⁹ [Public Health | Data USA](#)

¹⁰ [Public Health Degrees at Risk Under New Federal Loan Rules - This Week In Public Health](#)

¹¹ [Social Work | Data USA](#)

¹² <https://naswfl.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Updates/ID/3303/What-DOEs-Proposed-Change-Means-for-Social-Work-Degrees>

Whereas, BSW students at UNR achieve an 80% pass rate on the social work licensing exam, which is 13% above the national average¹³;

Whereas, social workers help individuals, families, and communities in health and human services;

Whereas, social workers are the largest providers of mental health services in the United States and enact policy change on the federal level ¹⁴;

Whereas, the field on social work is projected to grow by 11% from 2020- 2030, surpassing other job market growth ¹⁵;

SEC. 4. EDUCATION

Whereas, the most common sector, by number of Education degrees awarded, is Public, 4-year or above (172,661 completions)¹⁶;

Whereas, the University of Nevada-Reno awarded 354 degrees in 2023¹⁷;

Whereas, the University of Nevada-Reno awarded 168 degrees in Spring 2023 and 129 degrees in Spring 2024;

Whereas, educators are vital supporters of our society and required to support the future generations;

Whereas, educators serve as the fundamental and continuation for all college subjects, including but not limited to Philosophy, Economics, Policy Analysis, Nursing, Business, and International Affairs;

Whereas, Nevada's system of education consistently ranks near the bottom nationwide, and removing further support from future teachers will only damage the state's education further;

Whereas, many big contributors to Nevada's poor assessment in education include a lack of funding, poor test scores, and a shortage of student-teachers;

¹³ <https://www.unr.edu/degrees/majors/social-work%5C>

¹⁴ <https://socialwork.charlotte.edu/news/2021-03-25/social-workers-are-essential/>

¹⁵ <https://socialwork.columbia.edu/news/bridging-gap-urgent-need-social-workers>

¹⁶ [Education | Data USA](#)

¹⁷ Ibid

Whereas, the Federal Government’s notion on Professional Degrees will further attribute to the state’s educational shortfalls in funding and teacher shortage, as the career will continue to appear less attractive to future educators, further transforming the role into one with incredibly low supply yet high demand;

SEC. 5. SPEECH PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY

Whereas, the most common sector, by number of Speech Pathology and Audiology degrees awarded, is Public, 4-year or above (6,258 completions)¹⁸;

Whereas, the University of Nevada-Reno has awarded 22 degrees in 2023¹⁹;

Whereas, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has certified 2.3 Doctorates of Audiology (AuD’s) per 100,000 Nevada residents;

Whereas, the number of certified AuD’s per capita within Nevada is ranked 50th in the nation, highlighting the severe lack of availability and accessibility within the state;

Whereas, the number of ASHA certified 33.4 Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) per 100,000 Nevada residents²⁰;

Whereas, the masters program is the entry level degree for a SLP, and the average cost of a SLP masters program ranges from \$23,000-\$75,000²¹;

Whereas, the clinical doctorate is the entry level degree for an AuD, and the average cost of an AuD ranges from \$76,000-\$150,000²²;

Whereas, the costs for these degrees are already growing increasingly expensive, which already deters students from pursuing the necessary degrees;

Whereas, on top of the clinical hours needed and additional licensure costs, lack of federal assistance can detrimentally affect a wide range of scholars;

SEC. 6. ACCOUNTING

¹⁸ [Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology | Data USA](#)

¹⁹ [Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology | Data USA](#)

²⁰ [Pressing Need for SLPs: State by State Metrics](#)

²¹ [Is a Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology Worth It?](#)

²² [Audiology School Cost](#)

Whereas, the most common sector that offers accounting programs are Public, 4-year or above institutions (i.e. 37,847 completions as of 2023)²³;

Whereas, the University of Nevada-Reno has awarded 80 degrees in 2023;

Whereas, nationally, the accounting profession remains a critical component of the U.S. economy and business sector, with more than 1.5 million accountants and auditors employed across the United States, sustaining businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government institutions;

Whereas, depriving accounting majors of recognition in federal policy jeopardizes access to higher education for students pursuing careers in accounting and related professional roles, including underserved, first-generation, and economically disadvantaged populations who rely on federal student aid to complete their degrees;

Whereas, excluding accounting degrees from the “professional program” definition may reduce enrollment in accounting majors and worsen the current shortage of qualified accountants, disrupting essential functions such as financial reporting, auditing, and business operations across the U.S.;

SEC. 7. FILLER

Whereas, nationally the total amount of degrees awarded in the following fields sum up to 282,600 degrees, and 1,160 degrees for the University of Nevada-Reno²⁴;

Whereas, it is vital to our growing nation we continue to recruit qualified, prepared, trained and supported practitioners;

Whereas, the fields targeted by this announcement are primarily female dominated, falling under the “Pink Collar” Classification²⁵;

Whereas, the targeting of diverse and primarily female programs serves as a threat to the occupational outcomes of women and minorities; (good transition for call-to-action section)

Whereas, this policy threatens to deprive scholars and workers of vital opportunities for generations to come;

²³ [Accounting | Data USA](#)

²⁴ [Data USA](#)

²⁵ [Historical Overview of Pink-Collar Jobs](#)

140 *Whereas*, federal agencies are legally required to review and provide responses to all substantive
141 public comments received during the comment period;

142 *Whereas*, courts may invalidate or overturn newly adopted policies and definitions if the agency's
143 responses to these substantive comments are deemed inadequate or deficient;

144 *Whereas*, with the official publication of the proposed definition (NPRM)²⁶, the public will
145 receive a 60–90-day public comment window where practitioners, associations, universities, and
146 advocacy groups can legally push or force the DOE²⁷ to change the definition;

147

²⁶ [Notice of Proposed Rule-Making](#)

²⁷ Department of Education

148 ***BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS...***

149 *Be it resolved that,* the Associated Students of the University of Nevada-Reno supports affirming
150 the value of “Non-Professional Degrees” in our current workforce;

151 *Be it further resolved,* that the Associated Students of the University of Nevada-Reno will continue
152 to work with on-campus bodies, such as Faculty Senate, to outwardly express the support for these
153 programs;

154 *Be if further resolved,* that the Associated Students of the University of Nevada-Reno will continue
155 to advocate to the Department of Education regarding the NPRM;

156 *Be it further resolved,* that a copy of the legislation be sent to the following:

- 157 • Brian Sandavol, President of the University of Nevada, Reno;
- 158 • Amy Koekes, Associate Director of Student Engagement Outreach;
- 159 • Luis Aguilar-Herrera, Associate Director, Student Government;
- 160 • Michael Flores, Government and Community Engagement;
- 161 • Heather Speed, Vice President of Student Services;
- 162 • Jennifer McClendon, Faculty Senate Chair;
- 163 • Joshua Garn, Associate Dean of the School of Public Health;
- 164 • Mel Flores, Dean of the School of Public Health;
- 165 • Lillian Wichinsky, Dean of the School of Social Work;
- 166 • Casilde Isabelli, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts;
- 167 • Carmina Aglubat, President of ASUN;
- 168 • Ethan McNamara, Vice President of ASUN;
- 169 • Isabelle Hatch, Director of Governmental Affairs;
- 170 • Leaf Acklin, Speaker of the 93rd Senate Session;