

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2000-2001 Meeting #28, Tuesday, May 01, 2001

Present: McKeever (chair), Smelser (vice-chair), Bitterwolf, Brunsfeld, Chun, Finnie, Foltz, Fritz, Glen, Goble, Goodwin, Guilfoyle, Haggart (w/o vote), Hong, Kraut, McCaffrey, McClure, Meier, Nelson, Nielsen, Olson, Norby, Pitcher (w/o vote)
Absent: Thompson, Trivedi **Observers:** 5

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair, Professor Kerry McKeever, called the meeting to order at 3:50 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

Minutes. The council accepted the minutes of the April 26, 2001, meeting as distributed.

Chair's Report. Chair McKeever offered her congratulations to the newly elected Faculty Council officers and noted that they would offer excellent leadership to the council next year. She also announced that Councilor Bitterwolf had agreed to go to the Corrections Education Committee meeting in Boise on May 7th. McKeever reported that the visit of Governor Dirk Kempthorne to the campus yesterday went very well. Those sentiments were echoed by the provost and he noted that the governor had told U of Idaho President Hoover that he was pleased with the meeting. McKeever also took particular note of the "tasty and healthy" food platters that had been prepared by Ann Thompson for this meeting.

Provost's Report. Provost Pitcher noted that **commencement ceremonies** were scheduled for May 10th in Idaho Falls, May 12th in Boise, May 14th in Coeur d'Alene, and May 19th on the Moscow campus. Pitcher also reported that a review team from the Higher Education Research Council was on the campus looking at U of Idaho research funding proposals.

Sabbatical Leave Report. **It was moved and seconded** (Foltz, Nelson) to **allow the provost to notify candidates for sabbatical leave** of their nomination by the Sabbatical Leave Evaluation Committee and subsequent approval by the provost. These nominations will be brought before the council for **formal approval at the beginning of the 2001 Fall Semester** and then forwarded to the SBOE/Regents. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

Approval of May Degree Candidates. As required by *Faculty-Staff Handbook* section 4910, the Faculty Secretary asked the council to approve the Registrar's list of candidates for earned degrees for the May 19th commencement. It was **moved and seconded** (Brunsfeld, Kraut) **that the Faculty Council, acting for the university faculty, recommend the candidates for earned degrees as presented in the official listing of the Office of the Registrar.** The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

Committee on Committees Report. The Committee on Committees report (a seconded motion) of **appointments to standing committees for the 2001-2002 academic year was presented to the council.** The committee also asked the council to allow the faculty secretary, faculty council chair, and faculty council vice-chair to continue to make appointments/replacements as necessary over the summer. The secretary added one new name to the previously prepared report. The Committee on Committees will report back to the council at the first meeting of the new academic year on the summer appointments. The council **adopted** the committee report, as amended, by unanimous voice vote.

Staff Affairs Committee Report on Health Benefits. Linda Odenborg, a member of the Benefits and Compensation Subcommittee of the Staff Affairs Committee, presented their report to the council. Odenborg provided the council with the background of the work of this subcommittee. She said that after receiving input from many staff members (326 responses to a Fall 2000 survey) on health care issues the **Staff Affairs Committee made the following recommendations in January 2001,** to U of Idaho President Hoover:

- that the current Health Advisory Group be made an official administrative committee working in partnership with other advisory groups in the selection of health coverage plans – a group that communicates effectively with its constituents (potential users-patients) – a group that has faculty and staff representatives
- that the present "closed" process of selecting a health care provider become an open procedure
- that the Health Advisory Group pass on to the Administrative Affairs Officer the key concerns of the staff related to health care coverage, in particular:
 - concerns over costs and fees
 - patient fees too high
 - specialist co-pay too high
 - cost increases not in step with salary increments
 - concerns with providers
 - too little communication with providers and patients
 - too few local providers
 - need for long travel distances to see specialists

- concerns with benefits
 - too little dental coverage
 - few eye benefits
 - lack of choices
 - little coverage for non-traditional health care
 - little preventive care coverage
 - more mental health coverage
 - better coverage of managed illnesses
 - coverage for temporary employees

Odenborg hoped that the Faculty Council might be able to provide help in getting these health care issues addressed by the university administration. Some councilors provided information that gave further substance to the subcommittee's report. Others expressed concern over the formation of an "administrative" committee that would lack credibility because this type of committee is controlled by "administrative" appointments. Still others had questions about how many state employees were covered by our provider and how coverage negotiations are handled. Chair McKeever and Provost Pitcher pointed out that the Faculty Council previously had received reports on health benefits each semester, but none were received this year.

The majority of the council agreed that it was obvious from the number of questions being asked by the council today, that the council needed more information about current and proposed health care benefits, coverage, providers, and other related information. It was also the consensus that the council needed to bring in experts in this area to discuss the comparativeness of our health care coverage and the trends in this area. The university needs to communicate with its employees on these issues and it needs to be done before the fall.

The provost cautioned the council about seeking to become a part of a greater state employee health benefit system. He reminded the council that there are certain benefits, as well as a good deal of autonomy, that the U of Idaho enjoys because of its Constitutional standing in the state. It was **moved and seconded** (Goble, Smelser) that the **provost provide the council with a comprehensive report of the decision-making process in deciding on health care benefits and the selection of a health care provider, by the beginning of the Fall Semester**. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

Faculty Council Task Force on the Course Evaluation Process Report. Councilor Nielsen noted that in March the council had approved implementation of an on-line format for course/instructor evaluations. If the faculty approves that change at the May 8th university faculty meeting, then some procedures outlined in the current *FSH* section 2700 will become obsolete. The proposed revision would bring this section in line with the new format, and clarify the wording to match current practice. The task force recommendation would make ***Faculty-Staff Handbook* section 2700: Student Evaluation of Teaching read as follows:** [deletions are ~~struck through~~ and additions are underlined]

A. PURPOSE. Student evaluation of teaching has two purposes. First, student evaluations assist individual instructors in improving their own teaching ("instructor," as used in this section, refers to any teaching member of the faculty or staff). Second, they assist academic administrators in counseling instructors about their teaching and they are carefully weighed as a factor in judging the teaching component in tenure, promotion, and salary determinations. To achieve the first of these purposes instructors are urged to provide their students with mechanisms for evaluation throughout the semester. To assist academic administrators in evaluation, the following policy and procedures have been adopted.

B. ~~POLICY~~ POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

B-1. All students will have the opportunity every full semester to evaluate each of their instructors. Thus student evaluation of teaching is required in all sections of all courses during Fall and Spring semesters.

B-2. The standard university form, as approved by the faculty, will be used by all instructors in all of their classes, except in the College of Law which will use an evaluative device which it has tailored to its needs.

B-3. The Office of Academic Affairs has the responsibility of oversight in the administration of the evaluations, except those in the College of Law.

B-4. The evaluation shall take place during the last three weeks of instruction in each of Fall and Spring semesters.

B-5. Instructors shall not see the evaluation results until after final grades have been submitted.

B-6. The Office of Academic Affairs shall see that a database of evaluation results for at least the last five academic years is maintained. These results shall be made available to colleges and academic units as needed, and the numerical summaries of an instructor's evaluations shall be made available to students or other members of the university community upon request.

~~C. GENERAL PROCEDURES.~~

~~C-1. Clerical services for the program such as producing the required number of copies of the form, sending them to instructors, receiving and collating the completed forms are provided by the Office of Academic Affairs.~~

~~C-2. Not later than the twelfth week of the semester the Office of Academic Affairs duplicates the required number of standard university forms and sends them to the instructor in envelopes marked for each class.~~

~~C-3. During the thirteenth or fourteenth week of the semester, instructors are to hand out the forms in their classes. To ensure clear photocopying of the forms, students must fill them out with a black pen or Number 2 pencil. The instructor must designate a student monitor, leave the room, and allow at least 20 minutes for the students to fill out the forms. The student monitor collects the completed forms and takes them, in the envelope provided, immediately and directly to the Office of Academic Affairs or to the designated collection point.~~

~~C-4. The Office of Academic Affairs tabulates all forms, except those from the College of Law, and returns forms and tabulations to the deans of the appropriate colleges.~~

~~C-5. Deans will photocopy the fronts of all forms and, after the grades for the semester have been turned into the registrar, the deans send the originals of all the forms to the instructors concerned. Tabulation and photocopying of forms for the College of Law will follow procedures worked out between the College of Law and the Office of Academic Affairs.~~

~~C-6. Deans make the tabulations and photocopies available to the departmental administrators concerned. College procedures determine whether the files of photocopies are kept in the college or departmental office. In either case, they are to be retained for a minimum of five years so they can be used in connection with annual performance evaluations, periodic performance reviews, and tenure and promotion considerations.~~

~~C-7. The Office of Academic Affairs makes copies of the tabulations available to students and other members of the university community for not less than five years.~~

It was **moved and seconded** (Nielsen, Bitterwolf) **to approve the changes in FSH section 2700 as presented in the task force’ report.** The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote. The item will be presented to the faculty at a special faculty meeting in September.

Councilor Nielsen **then presented to the council a revised evaluation instrument.** Nielsen said that a change in evaluation format presents an excellent opportunity to rethink the evaluation instrument used in instructor evaluations. Features of the task force proposed form include:

- o **Student Effort Questions.** A sequence of five questions comprising a self-evaluation of the student’s effort. Data that is currently self-reported, like current gpa, can be gathered automatically and with confidence when the student is on-line.

What grade do you expect to receive in this class?	A	B	C	D	F
What grade were you working to attain?	A	B	C	D	F
How often did you attend class?	90%+	80%+	70%+	60%+	<60%
How often were you fully prepared for class?	90%+	80%+	70%+	60%+	<60%
How would you rate the quality of your effort in this class?	A	B	C	D	F

- o **Customizability.** No single form can be a “good fit” for every course offered. In fact, there is no agreement even on what qualities constitute “good teaching”. The current form uses a mandatory set of five multiple-choice and two essay response items. The seven items on the current form have been replaced with two customizable sections, one on the quality of instruction and one on the quality of the course itself. Each section has only one mandatory multiple-choice item and one parallel essay-response item, all worded very generally. Each instructor is to provide context to the mandatory items by selecting a set of zero to ten preliminary items from a large menu.

1. *Rate the instructor of this course relative to each of the qualities listed below* (highest rating is 4)
(Menu questions from the “Instructor” section are placed here) 4 3 2 1 0
Overall, how would you rate the instructor’s performance in teaching this course? 4 3 2 1 0
Comment on the instructor’s performance. What was most helpful? What could be improved?
 [essay text input]

2. *Rate the course itself relative to each of the qualities listed below* (highest rating is 4)
(Menu questions from the “Course” section are placed here) 4 3 2 1 0
Overall, how would you rate the quality of this course? 4 3 2 1 0
Comment on the quality of this course. What was most helpful? What could be improved?
 [essay text input]

- **Linking the essay and multiple-choice items.** In the new form the essay-response items are linked directly to the mandatory multiple-choice items. The essay-response items thus provide an opportunity for students to explain their multiple-choice responses.
- **Linear scale.** The “Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree” scale used by the current form is replaced with a linear scale of 4 to 0 to minimize ambiguity and also to correspond directly to the way in which results from these items are commonly reported and used at the university.
- **Facilities and Technical Support Section.** The last section of the proposed form involves questions on the quality of facilities and technical support for the course. These questions do not deal with the instructor’s performance and would not be used in evaluating the instructor.

3. Instructional Environment

How would you rate the instructional environment for this class (quality of classroom facilities and equipment, classroom audiovisual equipment, lab space, lab equipment, etc.)? (highest rating is 4)
4 3 2 1 0

Comment on the course’s instructional environment. What aspects were positive? What could be improved?
[essay text input]

4. Technical Support

How would you rate the effectiveness of the technical support services available to you in fulfilling the requirements of this course (computer labs, computer assistance, network availability, library resources, etc.)? (highest rating is 4)
4 3 2 1 0 N/A

Comment on the technical support available for the course. What was most helpful? What could be improved?
[essay text input]

The menu of possible items that could be included on the evaluation form was too extensive to publish in the meeting minutes. The entire list can be viewed at: <http://www.uidaho.edu/~markn/eval>. Councilor Nielsen said that **early in the semester instructors would log onto the university information system and select the items they wish to appear on the evaluation form** for each of their courses. Students would complete the evaluation during the last three weeks of instruction. After the submission of final grades, instructors (and unit administrators) could view the evaluation results by logging onto the system.

The proposed form generated a considerable amount of **comment and discussion**. The major points were:

- administrators and departmental faculty can select a common set of items to be used
- academic departments could write/design items relative to their types of courses (like studio courses)
- the raw data will be available to instructors and departments
- a student can opt out of doing the evaluation form – but his or her demographic information will be captured
- uncertainty as to how the major questions will be used (or possibly misused) in the annual evaluation process
- questions about 4-0 rating scale with no interpretation (excellent to poor) vs. the current “strongly agree, etc.” rating scale – students may have difficulty interpreting the rating system – this needs more discussion
- the ratings are useful for comparison purposes – quality of course and performance of instructor
- the menu of items can be continually worked on to improve their usefulness in the evaluation
- other evaluation issues need to be discussed – these can be sent to the Faculty Affairs Committee
- the form needs university faculty approval

The consensus of the council was that the proposed form should be held for further discussion by the 2001-2002 Faculty Council in the fall and then brought to the university faculty at a special meeting. Chair McKeever asked the task force to continue refining the document and be prepared to bring it back to the council in the fall. She also asked that the proposal be widely distributed to the faculty via print and the web.

Recognition of Chair McKeever. Faculty Secretary Peter Haggart presented Professor McKeever with a thank-you letter and an engraved plaque that recognized her excellent work on behalf of the U of Idaho faculty this year. The presentation was met with remarks of gratitude and a round of applause from the council. Chair McKeever, in turn, thanked the council for their good work this year and the support that she had received.

Adjournment. Chair McKeever adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart
Secretary of the Faculty Council