

University of Idaho  
**FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES**

**2002-2003 Meeting #6, Tuesday, October 15, 2002**

**Present:** Bitterwolf (chair), Wagner (vice-chair), Baillargeon, Chandler, Cloud, Daley Laursen, Fairchild, Guenther, Haggart (w/o vote), Lillard, McGuire, Nelson, Netzer, Pitcher (w/o vote), Reese, Rinker, Schekler **Absent:** Bailey, Hong, McCaffrey, McClure, Pikowsky, Rahim **Observers:** 11

**Call to Order.** A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair, Professor Thomas Bitterwolf, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

**Minutes.** The council accepted the minutes of the October 8, 2002, meeting as distributed.

**Chair's Report.** Chair Bitterwolf welcomed Professor Joseph Cloud as the newly elected council representative from the new College of Science and noted that the Faculty Council was now at full strength with 21 voting members (23 total). In closing, Bitterwolf reminded the council that the Idaho political candidate forum would be held on Wednesday evening in the Idaho Commons food court.

**Provost's Report.** Provost Brian Pitcher distributed to the council an announcement concerning the formulation of a Faculty Evaluation Task Force. In light of the recent changes to the *Faculty-Staff Handbook* with regard to the evaluation of faculty members, the task force is charged with making recommendations and assisting in the planning for implementation of the redesigned performance evaluation process. His memorandum to the task force members emphasized that the U of Idaho wants an "annual evaluation process that is thorough, consistent and fair." The group is chaired by Professor Mike Weiss. Pitcher also noted that a memorial for the late Lionel Hampton will be held on the campus this Wednesday evening.

**FC-03-008, Proposed Changes in the Geography Degree Programs in the College of Science.** The proposal eliminates the B. A. and B. S. degrees in Geography, formerly offered by the old College of Letters and Science, while retaining the B. S. degrees in Geography and Cartography, formerly offered by the old College of Mines and Earth Resources. They will now be offered by the new College of Science. Councilor Daley Laursen asked the council to disregard the inference suggested in the memorandum from Dean Bennett regarding these changes that said that, "*a move to RCM will attribute more importance to college affiliation of degree programs.*" Daley Laursen said that Responsibility Center Management (RCM) formulas make no distinction as to college affiliation of degree programs. Thus, there is no extra benefit, financial or otherwise, to having a degree program reside within a particular college. The seconded motion from the University Curriculum Committee was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote. After the vote it was noted by the provost that the university is seeking to establish requirements for a university-wide Bachelor of Arts degree to replace the one that had been exclusively offered by the old College of Letters and Science.

**FC-03-009, Proposed Changes in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures B. A. Degree Offerings.** The department proposes to discontinue the offering of separate B. A. degrees in each language and classical studies; instead offering a B. A. degree in Foreign Languages, with options in Classical Studies, French, German, Latin, and Spanish. After a brief discussion, the seconded motion from the University Curriculum Committee was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

**FC-03-010, Proposed Change in Degree Option Offer by the Margaret Ritchie School of Family and Consumer Sciences.** The school proposes to offer a Family Life Option under the Child, Family, and Consumer Studies major. This change is in response to the report of an external review team and an internal U of Idaho study that recommended a change of emphasis in the old Consumer Affairs Option, that would allow students more flexibility in preparing for careers. After a brief discussion, the seconded motion from the University Curriculum Committee was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

**FC-03-006, Proposed Changes to *Faculty-Staff Handbook* Section 4930, Honorary Degrees.** The proposal came to the council from the Commencement Committee as a seconded motion and seeks to broaden the eligibility criteria beyond the state of Idaho to the international level.

The proposal changes the criteria to *“a person deserving of honor by virtue of scholarly distinction or noteworthy public service resulting in significant contributions to the University of Idaho, the state of Idaho, the nation or the world. In the selection of candidates for honorary degrees, although preference may be given to those who are Idaho residents or UI graduates, the university is pleased to honor persons who have made significant contributions to national and international scholarship or public service that advance the principles of academic excellence and public education upon which the University of Idaho was founded.”* After a brief discussion the motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

**FC-03-007, Proposed Changes to UI Regulation L-9, Fresh Start.** The University Curriculum Committee (UCC) sent to the Faculty Council proposed changes to U of Idaho Regulation L-9 that were first brought before the council on September 25, 2001. That original proposal was sent back to the UCC for modification, and then returned to the Faculty Council with several significant changes on November 6, 2001. That second proposal brought about a lengthy debate and a motion to again send the proposal back to the UCC. A directive attached to the returned proposal asked the UCC to research the use of this type of program at peer institutions and to also review the purpose of having a Fresh Start program at the U of Idaho. The UCC took up the proposal again this fall. The UCC concluded that the program was appropriate to the mission of the U of Idaho. Also attached to the proposal were historical notes on the Fresh Start program, a narrative outlining similar programs at peer institutions, and a graph showing the progress of U of Idaho students electing to use this regulation.

After a background presentation by U of Idaho Registrar Reta Pikowsky and UCC Chair John Hammel, the council entered into a lively discussion on the concept and practice of a Fresh Start program. One of the major points raised by several councilors was the idea of setting a qualification standard that only admitted students to the program who had left the U of Idaho with a grade point average below 2.00. Why shouldn't a former student who had just average grades also be allowed to return to the U of Idaho and start over again? Responses to this question indicated that there were many other avenues for re-admittance that could be used by “average” students wanting to continue their studies after a long period of absence.

It was **moved and seconded** (Wagner, Cloud) *to amend the main motion by changing the grade point requirement for entry into the Fresh Start program from below a 2.0 to below a 2.50.* This motion was **withdrawn** by the makers of the motion.

It was **moved and seconded** (Schekler, Wagner) *to amend the main motion by striking the wording in the first paragraph of L-9-a. “2) must have an overall UI institutional GPA of less than 2.00, “ and renumber item 3 in that paragraph to item “2.”* Opponents of the amendment argued that leaving the regulation vague would require the addition of wording requiring the approval of the students academic unit head and dean. However, it was also pointed out that being vague would also lead to each department or college having its own set of rules, rather than one standard rule for admission to the Fresh Start program. Once again, it was pointed out that petitions and other existing avenues could be used to handle program special case enrollments. A separate question was raised about L-9-h., which allows students entering this program to eventually qualify to graduate with honors. When the question was called, the motion to amend the main motion was **defeated** (4 yea, 9 nay).

It was **moved and seconded** (Nelson, Rinker) *to table the original motion with the provision that the motion will be removed from the table when and if it is returned from the University Curriculum Committee. Furthermore, the University Curriculum Committee is asked to consider the following points when reviewing the proposal: 1) look at comparable data from peer institutions concerning GPA requirements for students entering similar programs, 2) review L-9-h. and determine if an honor distinction is fitting or appropriate for students graduating under this program, 3) consider raising the GPA requirement from 2.0 to 2.50 for students wishing to continue enrollment in the program (L-9-d.), and 4) determine whether the deadline stated in L-9-b. is necessary.* The motion was **adopted** by majority voice vote.

**Benefits Coverage for Temporary Lecturers.** Professor Gordon Thomas made a presentation to the council concerning an administrative decision (at the dean's level) to not allow the English department to hire several temporary lecturers for more than one semester. He stated that this change in the hiring practice (for some departments) in the new College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences meant that temporary lecturers who had previously been hired under full year contracts (including legally required fringe benefits) were now only offered one semester contracts which did not require the university to pay fringe benefits.

Professor Thomas said that this practice, although legal and perhaps a practical way to save money, was unethical in its treatment of temporary lecturers who had been accustomed to being hired on academic year contracts, which included benefits. The benefits of prime importance to these employees are health care coverage and retirement.

Councilor Chandler noted that it was the Faculty Council's responsibility under the Constitution of the Faculty to discuss and recommend changes in any policy affecting the well-being of members of the instructional staff – temporary or permanent. It was **moved and seconded** (Chandler, Rinker) that **the following resolution be adopted** by the council and sent to the university administration:

*In light of the decision made this summer to employ lecturers on only a semester-by-semester basis, the Faculty Council urges the central administration to treat our part-time and temporary faculty fairly. In particular,*

- 1. The Council condemns the practice of employing lecturers on only a semester-by-semester basis, when it is clear that the services of these lecturers will be required the following semester. Such a practice is clearly exploitative and is unfair to our lowest-paid colleagues. Furthermore, it erodes the ability of administrators to hire qualified instructors for these positions.*
- 2. The Council recognizes that the teaching demands for many departments require them to employ part-time lecturers for more than a single semester. Under these conditions, the Council urges that such lecturers be designated as having the status of "continuing instructor."*
- 3. While recognizing that there are many circumstances under which it may be necessary to employ temporary lecturers for a single semester, the Council further urges that administrators be encouraged to hire lecturers as "continuing instructors" whenever possible so that they might be eligible for health and retirement benefits as is required under state law. Such a policy is consistent with AAUP Guidelines that "compensation for part-time employees should correspond fractionally to full-time compensation, including essential fringe benefits such as health and pension contributions."*

Provost Pitcher expressed some concern over this issue being brought before the council in this manner. These decisions need to be made at the department and college level as they explore revising the general university policy concerning position appointments, paying particular attention to part-time and temporary instructional personnel. Pitcher provided the council with a handout which identified the criteria the university uses for determining eligibility for employment benefits.

Several councilors discussed with Professor Thomas the history of this problem and whether or not it applied to all academic units. The conclusion drawn from the discussion was that the practice of hiring temporary lecturers, using academic year contracts, had been the practice for decades in the old College of Letters and Science. When the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences was formed, the policy was changed, and departments were no longer allowed to issue contracts to temporary lecturers for more than one semester. This new policy was applied even though it appeared to be common knowledge that some of the people hired for the fall semester would be rehired for the spring semester. Benefits are not provided to these employees because they were not employed for the legally required five consecutive months. This conclusion was also supported by Professor Richard Keenan, the chair of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, who told of similar problems in his department. Another conclusion coming out of this discussion was that this hiring practice, while standing on solid legal ground, gave every appearance of being unethical.

The ethics considerations became more relevant when Reenie Arnold and Esther Tirima, both temporary lecturers for the English Department, told their stories to the council. They had no disagreement with the fact that appointment policies might change in the future, but they were distressed that there seemed to be little if any advance notice of the change in contract lengths, and that the administration did not really appreciate the impact these new contracts have on their income. They also stated that when on yearly contracts they felt the need and obligation to contribute more to the university than just their hours in the classroom and office. Council members and others in the audience noted that departments were placed in these unusual hiring practices because the administration has not allowed them to add new permanent lecturer positions. It was noted by several councilors that whatever position system the university eventually decided to use, it should be one that treated all employees in any category the same.

The provost and several members of the council expressed the viewpoint that there needed to be some kind of "bridge" for these employees as the university works toward restructuring positions. These temporary lecturers came back expecting to sign the same kind of contract with the same benefits that they had in the past. A central problem to the "bridge" concept was not only what was meant by this term, but when it could be applied, and whether it should benefit current employees retroactively. The conclusion was that a "fix" was needed.

Some councilors expressed the belief that the first part of the resolution was good, but had serious concerns with the rest of the resolution. This part of the discussion evolved into the circumstances of budget cutting that leads departments to, in fact, figure out how to do more with less – but that these practices are unethical. Many councilors also expressed some concern over the resolution’s use of the term “continuing instructor,” since it is not a category used by the handbook. There also appeared to be some confusion over the definition of “part-time” instruction, since the distinction of time worked is important in determining eligibility for benefits. Professor Thomas explained that, for the purpose of this discussion, he wanted to use a title that would distinguish those employees who were temporary, but were used year after year as course instructors. He was not suggesting the university change employee definitions. He also made it clear that the resolution was only speaking to those part-time lecturers who had contracts, that if put on a yearly basis, would legally qualify for benefits.

Professor Thomas went on to say that we respond to enrollment pressures by adding staff for the fall semester and can now employ them for one semester. Yet we know full well that the same pressure will be on courses for the spring semester, and we will hire these same people again for another semester. Since we can reasonably predict enrollment pressure points, why can’t we hire people for the entire year? Because it is cheaper to hire them on a semester-by-semester basis. Yet that seems to many to be an unethical approach to employment. Members of the council concluded that we needed to revise the way we are approaching the hiring process when under a budget crisis and at the same time figure out a way to build a bridge to the new policy for long-time temporary employees. Change will happen, but it should happen in a planned well thought out gradual way that will not mistreat these loyal employees. It was suggested that perhaps these bridging problems could be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the provost, deans, and department heads.

The discussion then moved to whether or not the proposed resolution to the administration would really have any affect on the current practices or even force the bridging concept to be adopted. Some council members thought that it was a wasted effort, while others believed that it expressed an important opinion that the administration needed to hear, and still others thought that the benefits issue required more time to study.

When the **question was called** the chair ruled that the **resolution** had been **adopted**. There were only two votes in favor of the resolution, but no votes against it, and the remainder of the council chose to abstain from voting.

Because of this ruling and the indecision on the part of the majority of the council, it was **moved and seconded** (Lillard, Fairchild) ***that the issues surrounding the employment of temporary lecturers would be on the agenda for further discussion at the next council meeting.*** The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote.

Chair Bitterwolf asked if the affected departments could be encouraged to meet with their dean and the provost with the task of negotiating a solution to these employment issues – perhaps with a “bridge” – before the next council meeting. Provost Pitcher, while agreeing with the sentiment of the chairs’ request, said that he saw two issues. One was the immediate need to solve current employee contracts, which he hoped might be resolved during the next week, and the second was to find a long-term solution to this problem.

**Adjournment.** It was **moved and seconded** (Lillard, Daley Laursen) to adjourn. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote, and Chair Bitterwolf adjourned the meeting at 5:16 p.m.

**Next Meeting.** The next meeting of the council will be held on **October 22, 2002.**

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart  
Secretary of the Faculty Council