

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2002-2003 Meeting #7, Tuesday, October 22, 2002

Present: Bitterwolf (chair), Wagner (vice-chair), Bailey, Baillargeon, Chandler, Cloud, Daley Laursen, Fairchild, Haggart (w/o vote), Netzer, Pitcher (w/o vote), Rahim, Reese, Rinker, Schekler **Absent:** Guenther, Hong, Lillard, McCaffrey, McClure, McGuire, Nelson, Pikowsky **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 (with praise from the chair for the secretary's ability to capture the "essence" of last week's discussion) the minutes of the October 15, 2002, meeting as distributed.

Chair's Report. Chair Bitterwolf reported to the council on the success of last week's **candidate forum** which attracted over 200 people to hear candidate's comments. He commended the excellent work of the ASUI and Staff Affairs Committee in organizing the event and noted that the experience of staging this forum has given the organizers some ideas for changes that need to be made next time. Bitterwolf said that having candidate "stand-ins" did not work as well as expected, and that the forum date needs to be set early enough to appear on election event calendars. Chair Bitterwolf also reported that he had met with **U of Idaho faculty at the Boise Center**. He said that many of these faculty members feel disenfranchised and have concerns about being treated fairly when being considered for tenure and promotion. He will continue his conversations with them, and seek ways to ease their anxiety level.

University-Level Promotion Committee. Professor Bitterwolf distributed a memorandum from the provost outlining the process for nominating faculty members to serve on the university-level promotions committee. This committee makes the final recommendation to the provost on faculty promotions from all academic disciplines. One-third of the members of last year's committee have been randomly selected by the provost to carry over to this year's committee. The rest of the committee roster will be selected by the provost and the chair and vice chair of Faculty Council from nominations submitted by council members. The provost urged council members to speak with their department and college administrators, as well as faculty colleagues, in seeking a large and diversified pool of nominees. The goal is to have the make-up of the promotion review committee represent as broad a cross-section of academic pursuits as possible. Nominations are to be sent to Chair Bitterwolf before the November 5th council meeting.

Provost's Report. Provost Brian Pitcher reported to the council that he had just attended meetings with a U of Idaho **special advisory group**. This group is made up of former and current corporate CEO's and the provost noted with some pleasure the quality of this group, as well as their willingness to discuss issues central to the mission of the university. The group heard presentations on university teaching, research, service and university budget problems. Pitcher reminded the council that U of Idaho **homecoming activities** will be in full swing this week. A number of boards connected with the university will hold meetings at this time, which will make for a very busy week at the U of Idaho. He told everyone to "hold tight and enjoy the ride."

Report on editorial changes to *Faculty-Staff Handbook*, Section 3140, Performance Expectations for Faculty. Faculty Secretary, Peter Haggart, reported to the council that there had been an error in the printing of *FSH* Section 3140 before it was approved at the May general faculty meeting. He said that the Faculty Affairs Committee chair had provided him with an early draft of the section that left out key terminology tied to other policy changes also approved at the May meeting.

After reviewing the minutes of last year's meetings, Haggart concluded that last year's council did, in fact, approve the correct version of the policy. Therefore, he was including (for information purposes) that final approved version in General Policy Report #21 to be published on October 25th. He said that this matter could have been handled editorially, in a less public manner, but he wanted the council to be fully aware of the circumstances in case members of the faculty had questions, and also to establish a public record of what had happened in the process to approve these policy changes.

Temporary Lecturer Benefits Issues Report. Due to the absence of Dean Joseph Zeller from his scheduled appearance before the council, Provost Pitcher reviewed the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences administrative decisions and instructions to departments as outlined by Dean Zeller in a memorandum sent to the council on October 17th. The memorandum reads:

The College of Letters, Arts & Social Sciences will work over the next several months to develop a policy on the hiring of non-tenure track faculty that is responsive to the instructional needs of the college and represents a workable relationship with the individuals hired, consistent with recommendations of the AAUP and reflective of the unique characteristics of the University of Idaho.

This process will begin by asking departments utilizing temporary lecturers to prepare a strategy that meets current and expected enrollment demand but reduces dependence on temporary lecturers.

Departments will examine their core instructional mission, their graduate program goals and the available resources within their current budget allocations. They will examine course delivery systems, current instructional paradigms, the potential of technology and on-line and hybrid delivery and methods for evaluating student learning. An historic survey of class demand in the departments utilizing non-tenure track faculty will be compared to current and projected class demand in those areas. The above data will inform them of the possibilities available within current resources and their obligations to the university mission and help them prioritize and identify necessary shifts in resource allocations and program emphasis. The outcome of this study will be recommendations from the departments on staffing profiles that meet the following expectations.

- *Meets the basic instructional demand of the degree tracks in the department.*
- *Supports the graduate mission and research goals.*
- *Addresses the instructional service requirements of SBOE, Core and for other degree programs on campus.*
- *Addresses Outreach expectations where applicable.*
- *Provides a balanced and flexible mix of tenure track positions, non-tenure track full time faculty, term limited full time faculty and temporary part time faculty.*
- *Presents a plan that utilizes graduate teaching assistant funding in a manner that both supports the overall mission of the department and generates headcount and credit hour production.*
- *Maintains student access, course diversity and credit hour production.*

These recommendations will be the basis for a resource allocation plan to be used to define a new hiring policy. In the interim the CLASS will work with the Provost and the affected departments' leadership to restore benefits to eligible temporary lecturers as a transition through this current dilemma. This plan will have a retroactive impact where applicable and a sunset that will be implemented upon adoption of a new hiring policy.

The target for completion of this process and implementation of a new policy in the College of Letters, Arts & Social Sciences is FY04.

Provost Pitcher then fielded questions from the council and audience concerning the contents of the memorandum. Councilor Rinker said that he hoped that the idea of balancing the budget by following a hiring practice that allowed the university to avoid paying benefits had “gone away.” He also wondered why these issues were not settled last summer, when the original hiring mandates were sent down by Dean Zeller to his department heads?

Provost Pitcher responded that the U of Idaho needed to reduce its unhealthy dependence on temporary lecturers. The goal should be to have a three to four-year limit on hiring the same temporary lecturer to perform the same teaching job. The current hiring practice also raises the question of whether these temporary employees, because of their continued hiring over many years, would be legally entitled to a permanent position. Pitcher said that there were any number of reasons that the concerns over lost benefits were not addressed earlier. Communication on all issues was difficult given the restructuring of two colleges and the concurrent budget crisis made things even more difficult. He offered an apology for the fact that these discussions did not occur earlier.

In response to another question, the provost said that human resources personnel are going to look at university hiring policies, and seek ways to make sure that these policies are consistent and equitable as they apply to all faculty ranks, including adjunct professorships and temporary lecturers. He reminded the council that the matrix that he supplied to the council at the last meeting provided a good oversight to benefits eligibility under a variety of hiring circumstances.

Professor Gordon Thomas summarized a number of concerns that he and others still had after studying the memorandum from Dean Zeller. He noted that, although the administration talks and writes about changes, that the memorandum does not speak to any changes to the current hiring practices, with the exception of adding a new employee category of “term limited full time.” He said that everything else presented in Dean Zeller’s memorandum was already being done by the university. Thomas also said that the current system used to hire temporary lecturers was really a very good one, but what is really lacking is the ability of departments to add more permanent positions. Councilor Chandler added that it did not seem to make sense to suddenly change from the current practice of having long-term temporary lectures to a policy of only being able to hire someone for three or four years and then be forced to start searching for a new temporary lecturer.

Provost Pitcher said that we would just have to agree to disagree on some of the viewpoints expressed this afternoon. However, he did make it very clear that the solution to the problem was not hiring more temporary employees. He told the council that our current circumstances involving the heavy use of temporary lecturers was the product of decades of staffing decisions resulting from what was commonly referred to as “extra section money.” Instead of working to solve the staffing problem permanently, the university kept on allowing departments to hire instructors on a temporary basis to staff these “extra sections.” Pitcher firmly restated his belief that this is not a healthy practice for the university.

While the immediate problem of benefits for the temporary lecturers has been solved for this year, the long-range hiring practices have not be solved. Pitcher said that Dean Zeller’s memorandum does not offer solutions, but it explicitly asks each academic department in his college to study the problems and find creative solutions. He said that involves such things as reviewing and refining the way classes are taught, asking questions about how faculty are given teaching assignments, looking at the potential of new technology in the classroom, and exploring the need for true temporary employees (people hired to teach for one semester), term limited employees, and full time faculty positions. The whole issue needs a good deal more study and the offering of truly creative solutions.

Adjournment. It was **moved and seconded** (Baillargeon, Fairchild) to adjourn. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote, and Chair Bitterwolf adjourned the meeting at 4:26 p.m.

Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Faculty Council will be held on **November 5, 2002**.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart
Secretary of the Faculty Council