

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2002-2003 Meeting #10, Tuesday, November 19, 2002

Present: Bitterwolf (chair), Wagner (vice-chair), Baillargeon, Chandler, Daley Laursen, Fairchild, Guenther, Haggart (w/o vote), Hong, Lillard, McCaffrey, McClure, McGuire, Netzer, Pikowsky, Pitcher (w/o vote), Reese, Rinker, Schekler **Absent:** Bailey, Cloud, Nelson, Rahim **Observers:** 2

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair, Professor Thomas Bitterwolf, called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

Minutes. The council accepted the minutes of the November 12, 2002, meeting as distributed.

Final Examination Schedule. The U of Idaho final examination schedule for the 2003-2004 academic year was distributed to the council for review. There being no comment, the schedule was **accepted** by the council as submitted by the Office of the Registrar.

Provost's Report. Provost Brian Pitcher told the council:

- the SBOE/Regents would be holding a teleconference meeting on November 22nd to handle:
 - K-12 standards
 - a U of Idaho request for bonding (\$48 million) for the construction of the Idaho Water Center in Boise, the first phase of the complex known as "Idaho Place"
- U of Idaho President Bob Hoover has scheduled an all-university meeting in the ASUI/Kibbie Dome the afternoon of December 13th to review university funding
- the academic sub-committee of the board will take up three new Ph.D. programs recently approved by the U of Idaho faculty

The provost then turned his attention to the subject of the **discontinuance of two degree programs in the College of Engineering.** Dean David E. Thompson was asked to join the council to **discuss and answer questions about the process** used to close the programs in mining engineering and geological engineering. Provost Pitcher described the process as one of analysis by the college and the involvement of students, faculty, alumni, industry leaders, and the engineering advisory board in reaching the final decision.

Of particular importance was what would happen to the faculty and students associated with those degree programs. There may be six faculty members that will be affected by these program closures. Three non-tenured faculty members have already received terminal contracts and the affected tenured faculty are being worked with on a case-by-case basis. Depending on a number of factors, the tenured faculty members could take early retirement, be terminated, or reassigned within the College of Engineering. In the case of reassignment, the new assignment would need to match priority program needs of the college. Relative to those kinds of steps being taken, the provost has distributed a memorandum to all deans outlining the problems and emphasizing the care needed in handling each case. A key care factor for the provost is frequent, open, and honest communication among the impacted personnel and the administration. That communication process also applied to industry contacts. The college spent a considerable amount of time consulting with industry leaders in reaching the closure decision.

Students majoring in these two discontinued programs will be; (1) encouraged to complete their degree programs within the next two years; (2) advised into another discipline, using the credits they had already earned; or (3) helped to find acceptance in a similar degree program at another university. Both the dean and the provost stressed that each closure case is unique and requires individualized solutions. There is no formula applicable to the program closure process.

In response to councilor's questions, Dean Thompson reviewed the process that he used to make these closure decisions. He said that when he knew that his budget would be cut an enormous 21.5%, he knew that the cut could not be made horizontally and equally across all programs in the college. That would only weaken all of the programs. He realized that the only way to preserve essential programs in the college was to make vertical cuts, thus eliminating some degree programs.

Although the entire process has taken well over a year to accomplish, Thompson said the method he used to identify the programs was rather uncomplicated. It was a matter of weighing the number of students graduating with the cost of getting those students to graduation day. Since 97% of the colleges' budget goes to personnel costs, it was easy to associate resources with those graduation numbers.

Dean Thompson said that after the analysis of the resources, it was clear that the programs in mining and geological engineering cost twice as much as any other program in the college. He went on to say that other factors could certainly come into play in making these kinds of decisions. For instance, the demands of industry for the program graduates now and in the future, the number of credit hours generated, the number of majors, and course enrollments. The bottom line for the college became the preservation of its key academic programs. Although student and industry interests can change from time-to-time, he said the college must rely on its well established and stable programs. Especially in times of contracting budgets. It is perhaps a reminder that in good financial times it is too easy to implement programs to meet ephemeral needs. Another important part of the equation is the belief that all engineering graduates needed a solid instructional foundation that will allow them to find employment opportunities, even in areas not covered by the traditional academic majors.

Councilor Chandler pointed out to the council that there was **a report** done last March that clearly **identifies academic programs that need additional review and offer either a high or low potential for future viability and efficiency**. The study was done by the "Enrollment Growth Group" and specifically addresses the question of how to maintain quality in undergraduate degree programs while addressing difficult financial challenges. The report can be accessed on the web by addressing:

http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/nasc/Data/standard_two_data.htm

In response to a question by councilor Lillard, Dean Thompson and council member Dean Daley Laursen talked about the need to consider any program cut in light of its **effects on the total education of a student**. Cuts should not harm the basic educational program in any college, and furthermore not harm the basic education offered to a graduate of any university program. Colleges also need a clear understanding of what prospective students are looking for in their education, as well as what industry is looking for in a graduate. All colleges should look carefully at interdisciplinary approaches to education. Colleges can no longer afford to stand alone.

Chair Bitterwolf thanked the provost, deans, and council for their far-ranging and informative discussion. He hoped that the provost and other administrators would benefit from the discussion. The provost added that council discussion, comments and concerns help guide the administration in making difficult program decisions, many of which still need to be made in the next two years. Bitterwolf concluded the discussion by noting how important it was to have administrators willing to share with the council the difficult process of reaching closure decisions. He thanked Dean Thompson for openly discussing the closure process used in the College of Engineering with the council.

Report on Intercollegiate Athletics. U of Idaho Athletic Director Mike Bohn provided the council with a fact sheet outlining the **rationale for the university's decision to seek all sport affiliation with the Sun Belt Conference**. Despite what the general public may believe, Bohn said that it is clear from NCAA studies that Division I-AA schools can not break even financially. He pointed out that even top-rated and champion football powerhouse Montana ran up an \$800,000 deficit last year. Although the U of Idaho also had a deficit year (\$123,000) Bohn said that it would have been much worse had we remained a Division I-AA school. Another affiliation concern usually raised is the cost of travel involved in the Sun Belt Conference, but Bohn pointed out that travel only amounted to one percent of the total athletic budget. On the other hand, he said student athletes were responsible for \$1.6 million in scholarship dollars, 70% of which is raised by private donations. Bohn pointed out the U of Idaho is very close to meeting all of the Division I-A standards in number of scholarships, number of sports offered, number of Division I-A home games, and average actual attendance.

Bohn also noted that the U of Idaho is currently meeting the gender proportionality test by having the same percentage of men and women involved in sports as are enrolled at the university. He pointed to high graduation rates, and said that the U of Idaho overall goals of attracting and keeping student athletes who are of high moral character and who earn good grades are being exceeded. Bohn said that joining the Sun Belt Conference will ensure that Idaho remains an NCAA Division I-A school. One of the major goals for the Idaho sports program is to be invited to become a member of the Western Athletic Conference (WAC).

In response to **questions from the council**, Bohn pointed out that it was an easy decision for the Western Athletic Conference to ask Boise State University to be a member. BSU has great athletic facilities, large home crowds for games, and offered a bowl game as well. He said that the U of Idaho will continue to play major universities, particularly on the west coast. One reason is that it helps financially, but just as importantly it helps recruiting by being seen in those venues. Bohn concluded his remarks by emphasizing that winning teams have a positive affect on the entire university, especially in terms of increased alumni giving and increased student enrollment. He said that many of the minor sports programs have winning programs now and that it would not be long before the same could be said for the football and basketball teams.

U of Idaho Climate Survey. Special Assistant to the President on Diversity and Human Rights, Raúl Sánchez, provided the council with a **report on “The Respectful Climate Survey”** conducted by outside consultants last spring. Approximately 41% of the students and 66% of the university employees took part in the survey. The purpose of the study was to gain in-depth information on U of Idaho employee and student experiences of the institutional “climate,” particularly with respect to diversity issues.

Sánchez told the council that the results of the survey provided no real surprises. Despite a local newspaper headline writer’s attempt to create a different impression, the survey shows that most U of Idaho employees are comfortable on our campus. The survey confirms the reasons that many people find the U of Idaho a pleasant place. It is a safe and respectful place to study and work.

However, Sánchez did point out that the survey did show that there are many issues still needing attention. Many respondents said that they had personally experienced an act of incivility (broadly defined) during the past year. He also said that specific groups (African American and Native American) felt considerably less safe and less socially accepted. But, on the other hand, Hispanic students felt very comfortable and accepted on the campus. The vast majority of employee participants had not experienced hostility based on gender, racial origin, religion, or sexual preference.

The survey also contains data for individual campus units. This is an unusual aspect of this type of study, and his office intends to follow-up this data with colleges and other work units seeking improvements in climate where problems have been reported. Sánchez concluded his remarks by asking the council to be aware of how we all contribute to the climate on the campus. A bad day for us can lead to a bad experience for a colleague or student. Employee awareness and leadership is essential in keeping our campus climate healthy.

The survey report can be accessed on the web by addressing:

http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/diversity/resp_climate_survey.htm

Adjournment. It was **moved and seconded** (Lillard, McClure) to adjourn. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote, and Chair Bitterwolf adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart
Secretary of the Faculty Council