

University of Idaho  
**FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES**

**2003-2004 Meeting #5, Tuesday, October 7, 2003**

**Present:** Wagner (Chair), Baillargeon, Burnett, Chandler, Dockrey, Fairchild, Pikowsky, Rinker, Voxman (w/o vote), Woolston, Young, Zemetra

**Absent:** Bailey, Bitterwolf, Cloud, Guenther, Exon, Lillard, McGuire, Pitcher, Reese, Stegner

**Observers:** 1

**Call to Order.** A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair Wagner, called the meeting to order at 3:36 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

**Minutes.** The council accepted the minutes of meeting #4 of the 2003-2004 Faculty Council, held on September 30, 2003 as distributed.

**Chair's Report.** Chair Wagner provided additional information regarding the upcoming November 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the chairs of the state's Faculty Councils and Senates with the Governor. Studies conducted by the states Division of Human Resources indicate that it will take an average salary increase of 17.1% in order for state employee remuneration to be on a par with counterparts in the private sector. As a result, the Division is asking the Governor to recommend a salary increase of 6.8% for state employees. Chair Wagner indicated that in light of this new information the Faculty Council and Senate chairs will ask the Governor for a 6.8% increase rather than the previously proposed 3%. Chair Wagner also announced that PERSI withholding will be increasing over the next few years, resulting in less net pay for those under that system. It is not clear if these increases will lead to (presumably positive) changes in the current formulae for distributing the retirement funds. Human Resources will be contacted to clarify this matter. Finally, Chair Wagner reported briefly on last week's SBOE meeting, indicating that all UI requests were honored, though not immune to some negative comments.

**Provost's Report.** Provost Pitcher was unable to attend the meeting.

**Committee Reports.** The council gave unanimous approval to two Notices of Intent: FC-04-001 College of Science/Division of Statistics and FC-04-002 College of Agricultural and Life Sciences/Agricultural and Extension Education, both of which involved name changes to existing programs.

**Report on status of part-time faculty (Nick Gier).** Professor Emeritus Nick Gier had been asked by last year's council chair Bitterwolf to prepare a report on the status of and concerns related to part-time faculty. Gier has not yet obtained general data relating to the situation at the UI, but did call council's attention to some nationwide trends that indicate ever increasing reliance on part-time or "contingent" faculty in meeting college and university instructional needs. In referring to the current situation in the UI Department of Philosophy, from which he recently retired, Gier noted that the Ethics course, taught previously in large part by regular faculty in sections of 50-60 students, are now taught in large sections by instructors without a Ph.D.'s. Moreover, recitation sections for this course are taught in some instances by instructors without a M.A. in Philosophy. Gier then organized the remainder of his presentation under the "5C" categories:

- **Communication:** Gier stressed the importance of communicating clearly and in a timely manner with contingent faculty so that the conditions of their employment were evident to all parties concerned. Councilors suggested that it would be useful for the university to determine a reasonably uniform, best-practice means for contracting contingent faculty to mitigate problems that have arisen.
- **Continuity:** Gier finds it immoral for departments to hire an individual on a semester basis (without benefits), when it is clear that the individual will be teaching the entire year, and thereby eligible for benefits. In Gier's view, this practice, while perhaps yielding short-term savings, is harmful to the reputation of the UI. Continued employment helps dignify the work performed by contingent faculty and allows them more participation in the life of a department.

- **Compensation:** Gier suggested that the UI should try to ensure that contingent faculty salaries are more commensurate with those of full-time faculty with similar credentials and who are performing similar work. He also noted the current disparity among departments in contingent faculty compensation. Gier observed too that many contingent faculty have not received any raises over the course of several years.
- **Consistency:** Gier has become increasingly aware of the inconsistencies in policies dealing with and remuneration of contingent faculty across various UI departments. The UI should work towards establishing a more level playing field in regard to contingent faculty.
- **Coverage:** In Gier's view, all contingent faculty working more than half-time should receive medical and retirement benefits.

After Gier's presentation it was generally agreed that it would be useful for the council to obtain more information about the current status of contingent faculty at the UI, and then perhaps refer certain issues to Faculty Affairs and the University Administrative Council for their consideration. Interest was also expressed in determining the effects of council action taken last year in connection with part-time faculty policy issues.

**NASC update:** Doug Adams provided the council with an update on the current status of the NASC self-study exercise. He gave a brief explanation of the process and a timetable for completion of this work. Adams is hopeful to have a preliminary draft of the self-study available by the end of the month. This will initiate a period of feedback and comments via a series of meetings with a wide range of groups and committees both on and off-campus. Adams anticipates having a final draft of the study completed by the end of the spring semester. He pointed out that, contrary to the essentially closed procedure used in 1994, the current open process should prove to be much more acceptable to reviewers. In response to a councilor's question, Adams stated it is likely that the main areas of concern arising from the study will center on UI resources and assessment. Management control and deferred maintenance are also areas of concern. In particular, Adams noted that more attention needs to be given to establishing course and program objectives. Adams had words of praise for the quality of work those who have submitted materials to him on the various aspects of the self-study. He emphasized the need for having procedures in place to address problem areas and to show that the UI is actively working to resolve immediate and long-range challenges. Adams observed that NASC teams are fully aware that universities face severe challenges and no institution is perfect. He said that while we want to put our "best foot forward" in the final report, it is essential that it is an honest good foot. It is crucial that we fairly assess our good points and our shortcomings, and that we demonstrate that we have put in place mechanisms to deal with the latter.

After thanking Professor Adams for his presentation, Chair Wagner called for a motion to adjourn, which was promptly attended to by Councilors Rinker and Baillargeon.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Voxman  
Interim Secretary of the Faculty Council