

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2003-2004 Meeting #18 Tuesday, March 23, 2004

Present: Wagner (Chair), Bailey (Vice-chair), Baillargeon, Burnett, Chandler, Cloud, Dockrey, Guenther, Gunter, Lillard, Morgan, Pikowsky, Pitcher (w/o vote), Reese, Rinker, Rosholt, Voxman (w/o vote), Woolston, Young, Zemetra

Absent: Exon, Fairchild, McGuire

Observers: 5

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair Wagner, called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

Minutes. With two minor revisions, the council accepted the minutes of meeting #17 of the 2003-2004 Faculty Council, held on March 9, 2004 as distributed.

Chair's Report. Chair Wagner reported that the SBOE had not approved the request to consider an increase in student fees. As a result, substantial additional cuts will be necessary. Wagner said that, because of the magnitude of the problems facing the UI, he finds himself in agreement with the Deans that the current UI structure and process for reviewing and eliminating programs is overly cumbersome. The Deans are working on a proposal to define criteria for program elimination and streamline the process. Their proposal will be brought to Staff Affairs, ASUI and the Faculty Council for consideration. Provost Pitcher noted that the multi-year plans were based on assumptions that are no longer valid. To adjust to the new realities there will be further administrative restructuring. The Provost also said it is anticipated that a campus-wide committee, consisting primarily of faculty, will be formed to establish criteria for reviewing programs and recommending necessary changes. The committee would be charged with developing a package of proposals for meeting the budget targets. After a broad review of these proposals the President and Provost, working with the Deans, would decide which recommendations should be pursued. The Provost emphasized the need for finding solutions on a comprehensive university-wide basis that complement the already developed multi-year plans. Councilor Gunter suggested that the committee look at the big picture and not just concentrate on academic programs.

Provost's Report. Provost Pitcher said that colleges and departments will probably have to deal with an additional 5% budget reduction for FY05; it is likely that FY06 will be even more difficult. With regard to the legislative mandated 2% salary increment, the Provost indicated that present thinking centers on implementing the raises first on Dec 19 rather than at the beginning of the fiscal year. This lag is due primarily to the inadequate legislative funding for the salary increments. However, under this plan, increments for promotions, reclassifications, and equity adjustments would occur at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Provost also said that Executive Administrators will forego any salary increments. Councilor Gunter suggested that dollar amounts rather than percent amounts be used in order to provide more relief to faculty and staff in the lower income brackets.

FC-04-036: Possible changes in the start of Spring semester. Reta Pikowsky, UI Registrar, presented a number of concerns regarding the current UI policy of beginning the Spring semester on a Wednesday. Councilor Lillard noted that her colleagues missed the loss of the two instructional days caused by the "late" Wednesday start; Councilor Burnett expressed concern about accreditation because of the shortened schedule. Other councilors observed that because of the various Monday holidays occurring during the spring semester, some students received considerably less instruction than others, depending on their class schedules. Vice-chair Bailey moved that classes begin on Monday. The motion was seconded by Gunter and approved unanimously. Noting that this change resulted in two additional instructional days Councilor Guenther moved that Good Friday be an academic holiday. The motion was seconded by Lillard, but failed on a 5 – 10 vote.

FC-04-032: Academic Unit By-laws. David Lee-Painter, chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee introduced a new section to be incorporated in the *Faculty-Staff Handbook* dealing with Academic Unit By-laws. He said that a primary purpose of the proposal was to reduce surprises in connection with promotion and tenure decisions. Under the proposed policy, all academic units must develop a set of by-laws that includes, among other things, the mission of the unit, policies on unit governance, organizational structure of the unit, criteria and procedures for annual performance evaluation and third-year review, and promotion and tenure guidelines.

The majority of the faculty of the unit, the unit administrator, the Dean of the college, and the Provost must approve the by-laws and any revisions. Furthermore, the by-laws are to undergo review and be re-approved at least every five years. Copies of the by-laws are to be forwarded to the Office of the Faculty Secretary.

Councilor Young questioned whether the by-laws needed the approval of, rather than review by, the Dean and the Provost. He also asked what would happen in case of disagreements among the various approval entities. Vice-chair Bailey said that it is important that a faculty member know that what has been approved at the department level is also valid at higher levels, and, consequently, approval of the by-laws by the Dean and Provost is critical. With minor changes suggested by Councilor Burnett, the proposed policy was approved with one dissenting vote.

FC-04-037: Discussion concerning faculty governance. Dennis Colson, Professor of Law, provided the Council with a historical approach to faculty governance. During his presentation he referred to a series of documents dealing with the establishment of the university, its structure, and relationship to the State Board of Education/UI Board of Regents. Colson discussed in some detail how power is distributed. He emphasized that it is a mistake to think in terms of separation of powers, but rather, the focus should be on blended powers as a more apt way to consider the relationships among the three basic “power units”: the SBOE, the President, and the Faculty. He noted that according to the Idaho constitution, “the immediate governance of the university shall be entrusted to the faculty, but the regents shall have the power to regulate the course of instruction and prescribe the books or works to be used in several courses....” Colson stressed that even though the faculty does not have the final say on most issues, the faculty should be mindful of its own interests and exert its influence to the extent possible. However, Colson emphasized that for the university to be successful it must adopt a blended power or shared governance approach to resolving issues, much as partners in a marriage must work in consort if the marriage is to succeed. Colson also pointed out that the Board of Education and the UI Board of Regents were combined in 1912. In theory, the members of this combined board should act in different ways according to the issues at hand; however, in practice, it appears that the current board has lost sight of this distinction, much to the detriment of the UI. Councilor Reese inquired about the increased role of the President in the affairs of the university. Colson responded that the increased power of the President and his/her office is in large part a result of the growth of the university over time. Presidents vary as to the relative weights they place on the power units. With reference to a question about the place of the Deans in the power structure, Colson said that they often find themselves tugged in two directions. Deans are hired by the President, but may teach courses or act in other ways more aligned with the faculty. Colson also noted that Idaho is one of just a few states where the Board of Education oversees higher education as well as primary and secondary education. This “Idaho plan” commanded national attention. Early attempts to divide the Board into parts with different areas of responsibility were struck down by the Idaho Supreme Court. Colson noted that having separate Boards could lead to strong budgetary competition between higher education and K1-12 supporters, with the likely result that higher education would fare less well.

Chair Wagner complimented Professor Colson on his presentation and hoped that this discussion would continue in the future. Councilor Lillard calmly moved for adjournment and the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Voxman
Interim Secretary of the Faculty Council