

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2003-2004 Meeting #19 Tuesday, April 6, 2004

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

Absent: Guenther, Pitcher

Observers: 8

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair Wagner, called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

Minutes. The council accepted the minutes of meeting #18 of the 2003-2004 Faculty Council, held on March 23, 2004 as distributed.

Chair's Report. Chair Wagner announced that any proposal regarding the possible elimination of Studio Arts would be considered by UCC and eventually the Faculty Council and the General Faculty. At the request of the Chair, Councilor Woolston briefed council on the very collegial and productive meetings of CLASS faculty members recently. As a result of the meeting and through the camaraderie among the departments in CLASS, an alternative proposal has been developed which would maintain the Studio Arts program. There will be further discussions about this new proposal in the near future. Chair Wagner commented that these deliberations are in connection with that college's multi-year plan, but do not address the additional dollars that will be needed to meet the FY05 budget targets. Wagner also noted that he had received a "storm" of responses to his proposal to consider furloughs as a means to deal with the unanticipated additional \$5,000,000 UI budget deficit. He asked Pat Sturko, Assistant Vice-president for Human Resources, to comment on her ad hoc committee's work to provide options for dealing with this problem. Sturko said that her committee has developed a set of options, with pro's and con's, that include furloughs, temporary salary reductions, lag-payrolls, leaves without pay, and shortened work weeks. The committee has also considered progressive or graduated pay reductions so that those in the lower income brackets would be minimally affected. Councilor Rinker expressed concern about the speed that the ad hoc committee's recommendations had been formed and lamented that there had not been adequate time for faculty input. More generally, he felt that faculty was not sufficiently informed about the nature of the overall budget crisis and was often left out of decision-making process. Councilor Lillard inquired about the possibility of declaring financial exigency. Chair Wagner responded that there was little enthusiasm for this approach. Councilor Gunter reiterated his concern about the lack of big picture budget figures. He and others wondered how intelligent decisions could be made without such information. Laura Hubbard, Vice President for Finance and Administration, agreed and said that her division was in the process of developing formats for such reports along with the Pappas Consulting Group.

Chair Wagner reported that efforts were proceeding in establishment of a restructuring committee, consisting primarily of faculty. This committee would formulate recommendations for potentially major university programmatic and operational changes. Formation of the committee and its charge is being done in consultation with incoming president Tim White. A draft proposal regarding this committee will probably be available within the next few days. Councilor Lillard queried if colleges outside of CLASS would be willing to contribute to the preservation of programs such as the Studio Arts program. It was suggested that it is important that the UI consider an overall plan rather than focusing on individual cuts. Dean Judy Parrish said it is essential that the faculty be "front loaded" in the decision-making process rather than having to react to proposals coming from the administration. She also pointed out that there are essentially three issues at play in the budget deliberations: (i) the already formulated multi-year plans for dealing with ongoing budget deficits, (ii) the immediate problem of dealing with the additional \$5,000,000 FY05 budget deficit, and (iii) the longer term problem of dealing with later years. Parrish said that deferring decisions now will only lead to greater problems later. Dean Daley Laursen emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to resolve the budget problems. In response to a councilor's question he said that we need to go beyond RCM to be successful. He also cautioned against "circling the wagons and shooting inwards." Dean Burnett observed that budgets are usually done at the margin and that the RCM model is beneficial in terms of decentralization and efficiencies. However, he said that the magnitude of future changes at the UI may overwhelm the flexibility and efficiencies of the model, and that thinking will have to occur on a more global scale.

Chair Wagner said that because of time constraints discussion of agenda items FC-04-038 and FC-04-039 would be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.

FC-04-040. Report from Laura Hubbard. Laura Hubbard, Vice-president for Finance and Administration spoke to the efforts her division has undertaken in achieving budget reductions in the 12½% range over five years. Decisions in her division are being made based on continued service to the entire institution while avoiding employee lay-offs in so far as possible. In the last three years Hubbard's division has eliminated 18 positions and reduced its base budget by over \$1,000,000. During fiscal years 2002-2004 the division of Finance and Administration has contributed \$2,500,000 to the institution through one-time reductions, G&A rate increases, and base budget reductions. Hubbard said that eventually it will be necessary to eliminate 40-45 positions. She also said that there has been no increase in parking fees for the last three years. Approximately \$370,000 has been invested in energy retrofitting, which has resulted in \$300,000 annual savings. Hubbard also said that by bidding out employee health insurance contracting, the UI has been able to avoid adding to the budget gap in this area. In response to Councilor Gunter's concern about not having big picture numbers, Hubbard responded that her office is in the process of preparing three kinds of reports: trend (high level) reports that would address Gunter's concerns; reports for Deans that can be used for decision-making purposes; and reports dealing with central financial management (utilities, employee benefits, etc.) that would be useful in making projections as well as in continued monitoring of the UI financial situation.

Hubbard said that there are ongoing efforts to restructure the entire division of Finance and Administration and to provide more training for division employees. With regard to Idaho Water Center, Hubbard said that the UI is responsible for the space to be used in FY04 and that Chuck Hatch and others are working on determining which programs will occupy the available space. She also said that the UI Foundation will need \$1,900,000 to meet its debt obligations for the project; various people are working on cost recovery strategies to offset this amount. In the past this amount had been an annual unrestricted cash transfer from the Foundation to the UI.

FC-04-041. Discouraging inappropriate personal attacks. Vice-chair Bailey emphasized the need for civil discussion and the avoidance of personal and dehumanizing attacks in dealing with controversial issues. Chair Wagner pointed out that students have taken some positive steps in this direction by sponsoring the Writing on the Wall project outside the Commons. Councilor Burnett stressed the importance of faculty setting the tone for civil discourse and pointed out that teaching goes beyond the classroom and is, in fact, a 24 hour/day enterprise. He said that students learn from role models and it is essential that faculty set the standard for discourse that is valued in a university setting. Sarah Nelson, while in agreement with the need for civil discourse, was concerned that messages on this issue coming from the president's office might have the effect of stifling discussion. It was recommended that a short statement on civil discourse be prepared and presented for approval at the next council meeting.

Near the conclusion of the meeting it was suggested that ways be found to ensure that faculty receive Faculty Council agendas and minutes in a timely fashion. Chair Wagner suggested that Councilors might follow his example by providing summaries of Council actions to their respective colleges and referring their constituents to the Council webpage for additional information.

Councilor Lillard, in an apparently upbeat mood, moved adjournment and the Council was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Voxman
Interim Secretary of the Faculty Council