

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2004-2005 Meeting #9, Tuesday, November 16, 2004

Present: Bailey (Chair), Anderson, Baillargeon, Beard, Bechinski, Cloud, Exon, Greever, Gunter, Houle, McMurtry, Reese, Reid, Rinker, Rosholt, Voxman (w/o vote), Woolston, Young

Absent: Hammel, McGuire, McLaughlin, Pitcher, Zemetra

Observers: 2

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair Bailey called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. in the Michael Board Room of the Albertsons Building.

Minutes. The council accepted the minutes of meeting #8 of the 2004-2005 Faculty Council, held on November 9, as distributed.

Chair's Report. Chair Bailey said that the nominations for the position of Interim Provost are to be submitted by November 18. Applications for that position are due November 29. The council will have the opportunity to meet with finalists for this position on December 1, 2, and 3 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Bailey asked for a volunteer to replace Councilor Exon on the Faculty Secretary search committee, and Councilor Reid responded favorably to that request. Chair Bailey noted that he had received a resolution from AFT calling for reduced university expenditures for intercollegiate athletics. Bailey said that in order for the council to make an informed decision about the resolution it would be advisable to hear all sides of the issue. President White would like to be in attendance when the resolution is discussed. However, because of his heavy travel schedule, he would first be able to attend a council meeting on Thursday, January 13. Since some councilors could not attend at that time it was suggested that the chair check the possibility of changing the meeting date to Tuesday, January 18 (*this date has subsequently been confirmed for consideration of the resolution*).

FC-05-011: J-3 Subject Requirements (Core Curriculum). This UCC approved catalog change adds to Section J.3 the sentence *Courses that are approved to satisfy a core requirement can be used to satisfy those requirements even if the course is completed prior to being approved as a core course.* This change gives students considerably more flexibility in fulfilling their core requirements. The change was approved unanimously by the council.

FC-05-012: General Education Requirements for Transfer Students. This UCC approved catalog change adds the above sentence to the catalog section dealing with transfer students. It allows transfer students who opt for the SBOE core a much wider range of core courses to fulfill their core requirements. The change was approved unanimously by the council.

FC-05-013: Student Grading System. Fran Wagner, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, and past chair of the Faculty Council, returned to his former (but temporarily upgraded) haunts to explain the rationale behind the Faculty Affairs Committee recommendation to not change the grading system at this time. Wagner said that although committee members did not have particularly strong feelings about a change to a + - grading system, the majority thought that the reasons for such a change were not sufficiently compelling at this time, in part because of the cost and logistics involved in switching to a new system. He said that informal polling of faculty, administrators and students showed mixed opinions regarding a possible change. Councilor Reid said he was not convinced by the rationale for not using + - grading, and, in his opinion, such a system would be both more accurate and fair. It was also noted that WSU uses a + - system, which can be viewed at <http://www.catalog.wsu.edu/Catalog/Apps/Acadregs.asp> and adoption of that system would be advantageous for University of Idaho classes that are cross-listed. Some concern was expressed about possible grade compression if the new system were instituted. Councilor Beard pointed out that the College of Law has long used a + - grading system without any such problems. He spoke strongly in favor of a change. Some councilors observed that it might be just as difficult to make distinctions between, say, C+ and B-, as it is between B and C, and that making finer grade distinctions could lead to increased student complaints about their grades. Chair Bailey, noting that most councilors appeared to favor a + - grading systems, suggested that the council undertake the task of gathering more information and input regarding this change, and then revisit this issue at a later meeting.

FC-05-014: Faculty Annual Evaluation Point System. Wagner described the intent of the Faculty Affairs Committee approved motion calling for changes to FSH 3320 Annual Performance Evaluation and Salary Determination for Faculty Members and to the Annual Performance Evaluation form. The committee recommended that the evaluation category 3 be labeled *Fully Meets Expectations* rather than the current *Meets Expectations*. The committee also recommended that *the 1 to 5 integer system on the Faculty Evaluation form for Teaching/Pedagogy, Scholarship, Advising, Extramural and University Service, Administration, and Other categories* be retained but that *a weighted average score (one decimal place) for the Department Chair Score and College Dean Score be used*. With regard to the first recommendation Wagner said that many considered a score of 3 to have a somewhat pejorative connotation even though a faculty is doing what is expected of him/her. For this reason, scores of 4 and 5 are frequently more common, though the original intent of the scoring system was that most faculty would fall into category 3. This situation has led to what some councilors referred to as evaluation inflation, making it more difficult to recognize truly outstanding performances. Various councilors said that the scoring system was not at fault, but rather the problem lay with the evaluators. Councilors stressed the necessity of giving more emphasis campus wide to the concept that a score of 3 is perfectly acceptable and should be viewed favorably in promotion and tenure considerations. In turning to the second recommendation, councilors were in general accord that Deans and Department Chairs should use a proposed weighted average score (one decimal place). Councilor Beard offered an amended motion to the Faculty Affairs recommendation, eliminating the proposed labeling change to category 3. His motion: *Retain the 1 to 5 integer system on the Faculty Evaluation form for Teaching/Pedagogy, Scholarship, Advising, Extramural and University Service, Administration, and Other categories, but use a weighted average score (one decimal place) for the Department Chair Score and College Dean Score* was seconded by McMurtry and approved unanimously.

At the conclusion of the meeting Wagner asked the council what message he should take back to the Faculty Affairs Committee with regard to the proposed labeling change that did not meet with council approval. Councilors suggested that *Meets Expectations* does not have a negative connotation and therefore no change to that wording is warranted.

Beard alertly called for adjournment. The motion was seconded and approved and the council meeting came to a close at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Voxman
Interim Secretary of the Faculty Council