

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2004-2005 Meeting #12, Tuesday, January 18th, 2005

Present: Bailey (Chair), (Adams w/o vote), Anderson, Baillargeon, Beard, Bechinski, Exon, Pikowsky (sitting in for Greever), Gunter, McGuire, McLaughlin, McMurtry, Morris (w/o vote), Reese, Reid, Rinker, Woolston, Young, Zemetra

Absent: Cloud, Hammel, Houle, Rosholt

Observers: 17

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair Jeff Bailey called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge, having returned from its exile necessitated by repair and remodeling to find everything fixed with new carpeting and new (and sturdier) chairs.

Minutes. It was moved and seconded (Beard, Baillargeon) to accept the minutes of meeting #11 of the 2004-2005 Faculty Council held on December 7th, 2004 with one minor editorial correction.

Chair's Report. On behalf of the council and himself, Chair Bailey expressed pleasure at the refurbished venue and welcomed everyone back. He reported that the annual legislative luncheon had taken place last week and had been attended by about sixty-five legislators (he would have liked to have had more) and forty faculty and other individuals from the several state institutions of higher education, including some from the University of Idaho contingent in Boise, as well as Bill McLaughlin, Joe Cloud, and himself. The luncheon went well and conversations with various legislators had seemed productive. He also reported that the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, of which we are a member, had met in early January and had finalized a draft document on academic principles, integrity, and best practices. That document has been published on their website (<http://www.math.umd.edu/~jmc/COIA/COIA-Home.html>). It would be a matter for council's discussion and possible adoption in the third or fourth week of February.

Finally he noted that the president's conversations with the faculty are continuing. President White is scheduled to meet with another group tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. and Chair Bailey hoped that a faculty council member would volunteer to be the facilitator at that meeting. If that was not possible he himself would be the facilitator.

Provost's Report. The chair welcomed the new provost, Linda Morris, to her first Faculty Council meeting in her new position and she received the applause of the group. She reported on the governor's positive proposal for higher education funding. However, she cautioned that even if the governor's recommendation should be adopted in full by the legislature, it would not be "business as usual" at the University of Idaho. The university will be dealing with the recommendations of the University Vision and Resource Task Force (UVRTF) and examining ways to change and strengthen the institution. She noted that the position of associate vice provost for academic affairs (her former position) will be left vacant and the duties associated with that position temporarily combined with those of the provost. The money thus saved will be directed toward improving university assessment. Assessment, particularly assessment of academic programs, is an important accreditation issue, recently reinforced by the findings of NWCCU accreditation visit last October. With that in mind she has asked Professor William McLaughlin to act as the university's assessment coordinator this spring. An Academic and Student Affairs group has been created to study the UVRTF's recommendations particularly as to how possible changes in student affairs may affect academics and vice versa. That group will report its analysis and findings to the provost. Any proposed changes will be brought to Faculty Council for review. The "prioritization tool" proposed by the UVRTF has received a number of comments and it is problematic because it is a proposal for the creation of such a tool rather than the proposal of a tool itself. The institution will need to develop such a tool, one that is flexible and useable. She has asked a group from the UVRTF to work with her this semester, with the goal of creating such a flexible, one-size-does-not-fit-all, tool. She is not sure whether the tool will be ready next month, but it will be necessary for the future in any case. Proposed prioritization tools would also come to Faculty Council for review and discussion.

Faculty Secretary. Chair Bailey welcomed and congratulated Douglas Q. Adams, Professor of English, as the newly appointed faculty secretary. He noted that the faculty secretary would only be the secretary for Faculty Council upon the vote of that body. It was moved and seconded (Gunter, Young) to elect the faculty secretary as secretary of Faculty Council. The motion carried unanimously.

FC-05-016, “Resolution on Appropriated Funds and Administrative Fees for Intercollegiate Athletics”: Chair Bailey suggested that the athletics and UI resolution be addressed in the following manner: Those individuals advocating for the resolution would be given 20 minutes to share relevant information. President Tim White would then have 20 minutes to share relevant information. Faculty Council would then ask questions as desired. Finally, Faculty Council would address the resolution.

Nick Gier, professor emeritus of philosophy introduced the substance of the resolution and spoke in its support. He noted that Faculty Council had adopted a similar resolution in 1983, when the university was stressed financially, and that that resolution had apparently been heeded in that he could find no evidence that appropriated funds had been devoted to intercollegiate athletics until 1987. In that period without state support the university garnered five league championships. He also raised the issue of fairness, noting that in FY 2004 some \$500,000 had been directed from unrestricted giving to athletics as well as an additional \$326,000 from the state appropriation; at the same time the university press was closed, an operation that he would aver was much more central to the university’s academic purpose. He also thought that it was unfair that other auxiliary services of the university were charged an administrative fee of 6% while athletics was charged only 1%. Much, he said, has been made of the overall economic impact of athletics in the community; he thought the impact would not shrink, but rather grow, if the university were playing regionally competitive opponents as opposed to more distant opponents with whom we were not competitive. He also noted that if the \$2.4 million of state appropriated funds currently going to athletics were redirected to academic programs that would “buy” forty-eight new assistant professors whose spending, house-buying, etc., would be a major economic boost to the overall community as well.

Dale Graden, associate professor of history, also spoke in favor of the proposed resolution. He noted that in his own career he had played collegiate soccer (an all-American in 1973) and had learned the discipline therein that had served him well in his graduate education. However, he noted the university was facing serious erosion of academic programs and the infrastructure that directly supported them and had to question the level of support given to intercollegiate athletics. He was concerned that President White’s public comments on the recommendations concerning the future of athletics made by the UVRTF meant that those recommendations would not get the same discussion as other parts of the UVRTF report. He questioned the long held assumption that athletic achievement translated into increased alumni support, noting that scholarly investigations of that connection had found no, or only marginal, correlations. Finally, he noted his concern with injuries to athletes occasioned by being overmatched physically by the teams we were choosing to compete against.

President White thanked the chair and members of Faculty Council for the opportunity to add to the discussion of the place of intercollegiate athletics at the University of Idaho. He said that in his view the university was at its core an academic institution with a responsibility to excel at teaching, research, and service. However, it also needed to be concerned with keeping alumni connected with their alma mater, engaging positive publicity and optimizing the students’ experience their “emergence and growth as a personage.” Many individuals find athletics an important component of these latter goals. As such it was important that we expect from intercollegiate athletics the same level of excellence we expect of academic programs. Doing so requires that they have appropriate resources with which to work. In sum, intercollegiate athletics was an important part of the university ecosystem.

He noted that the Athletic Department had received some \$2.4 million of appropriated dollars in FY 05. That formed some 26% of the total budget of \$9.2 million. The remainder comes from athletic revenues and private giving specifically dedicated to athletic purposes. He also pointed out that the athletic budget supported scholarships for 318 university students totaling a little over \$2 million, thus money came back directly to the university’s coffers in direct support of students, that is the equivalent of about 90% of the appropriated money. Finally with regard to resources he noted that in FY 03 (the latest year for which numbers were publicly available) the athletic budgets for Western Athletic Conference (WAC) schools ranged from \$8.9 million to \$20.1 million. At the same time the University of Idaho’s athletic budget was \$9.7 million (and slightly higher than it is currently) so we are at the lower end of the WAC’s continuum of spending.

He also said that, as president, he was bound, analogously to the Hippocratic Oath, to “not allow harm to the university.” With respect to his public statements concerning the recommendations concerning athletics of the UVRTF, he was concerned that they were being inaccurately portrayed by many of the press accounts and that those reports risked damage to the institution’s relationship with private philanthropy and hence needed appropriate correction consistent with the recommendation of the UVRTF.

The ensuing discussion raised a number of questions:

Was there any guarantee that the state appropriated funds currently devoted to athletics, if taken out of the athletics budget, would remain with the university? The president answered that there was no reason to assume the funds would not remain with the university.

Was there any exit strategy if we were not successful at the 1-A level? The president responded that we need to have appropriate metrics of success for everything we do and plans to change if quality is not forthcoming. It would be premature to be more specific right now.

What are the costs of competing at the 1-A level? What would be the costs of competing at the 1-AA level? The president said that going to the 1-AA level would be less costly but would also generate considerably less income to the point that to balance the athletic budget would probably require an additional infusion of some \$500,000. He also pointed out that there were intangible costs and revenues associated with a particular level of competition, noting specifically that most all “University of [state name]” have chosen to compete at the 1-A level. Analogously to the situation where the university hires an assistant professor, the athletic situation of the university needed a period of stability to test the appropriateness of the match before making a long-term commitment.

Why is athletics charged a 1% administrative fee and other auxiliary enterprises a 6% fee? The president responded that he did not know.

Does it matter if we can attract fans? The president noted that our demographic marketing area (Lewiston-Clarkston through Spokane-Coeur d’Alene), which we share with WSU, is actually larger than Boise State’s.

Bill McLaughlin, a member both of Council and the UVRTF, emphasized the fact that the relationship of athletics to the rest of the university and its costs and benefits is a very complex one. We need as an institution to work for transparency of athletic finances and assessment of success over the next few years. The president agreed that there should be full periodic reports on the condition of intercollegiate athletics (and many other things) to the Council on a regular basis. Other discussants noted that athletics must not be equated directly with football and that athletics builds fellowship among students and also contributes to the moral and physical development of student-athletes and that these are valuable components of the institution’s life.

Chair Bailey thanked the presenters and, noting that considerable discussion had now happened on a motion that had not yet actually been made, asked if someone would like to move that the resolution be adopted. It was duly moved and seconded (Reid, Zemetra) to bring to discussion the resolution on Appropriated Funds and Administrative Fees for Intercollegiate Athletics. Additional discussion of the matter centered around issues of timing and the appropriate information needed to make a constructive contribution to the ultimate decision. There was clear agreement that financial transparency was very important. The vote was 0 for, 17 against the resolution.

Adjournment. It was moved and seconded (Young, Anderson) to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was adjourned at 5:22 p.m. There will be no meeting of Faculty Council next week, Tuesday, January 25th.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Q. Adams
Secretary of the Faculty and Secretary to Faculty Council