

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2004-2005 Meeting #17, Tuesday, March 8th, 2005

Present: Adams (w/o vote) Anderson, Bailey, Baillargeon, Beard, Bechinski, Browder (sitting in for Reese), Farnen, Gunter, McLaughlin, Morris (w/o vote), Reid, Rinker, Woolston, Young, Zemetra

Absent: Cloud, Exon, Greever, Hammel, McGuire, McMurtry, Reese

Observers: 3

Call to Order: A quorum being present, Faculty Council Bailey called the meeting to order at 3:34 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes of meeting 16, February 22nd, 2005, were approved as distributed.

Chair's Report: The chair reminded the council of the meeting with the consultants the university has engaged to help it work through the issues surrounding the accounting changes which will impact how the university accounts for post-retirement benefits. Those council members who were able to attend the meeting (Adams, Baillargeon, Rinker) reported that the central issue is that the new standards (GASB 45) will require that all post-retirement benefits be handled as pension benefits are now, that is, they cannot continue to be handled on a pay-as-you-go basis but must be booked as a future liability. The university, and all other government entities subject to this change (beginning with FY 2008) must fund the liability (over a twenty-year period) or add it to its books (again over a twenty-year period). Our current post-retirement benefits plan would cost the university about \$10 million a year, either in the form of a payment into a trust fund or as an added liability, for the next twenty years. This \$10 million would be in addition to the \$4 million a year that we are currently paying in premiums for these benefits. This is a disturbingly large number and, as mentioned at previous meetings, the administration has put together a task force, one of whose members is Faculty Council's Mark McGuire, to make recommendations concerning the university's response to this challenge. Those faculty council members who had attended the briefing could report that at this stage in the deliberations there was no sentiment that those emeriti and honored staff retirees who were enjoying the current post-retirement benefit would lose it. However, those employees who were not yet retired might see it curtailed or eliminated. Pat Sturko, interim vice president of human resources, has expressed enthusiasm for Faculty Council involvement in the discussion and has expressed herself as being very open to scheduling special briefing sessions for faculty council members.

Moving to other topics, the chair reported that student applications were up a bit over this time last year but that the ultimate "conversion rate" of applications to registrations was of course yet to be known. Vandal Friday is coming up immediately after Spring Break and it was important that the university community extend a welcome to visiting potential students and their parents.

By the end of March it is expected that budget cuts and restructuring affecting the non-academic portions of the university will have been announced. By May similar decisions will have been at least tentatively reached for the various colleges. He reminded Faculty Council that if these budget cuts led to program closures or restructurings that those closures and restructurings would, by policy, need to be 'reviewed' by Faculty Council and thus there was the very real possibility that Faculty Council would need to meet in the latter half of May and into June.

Finally he announced certain upcoming agenda items for the council, including a discussion of the response rate of on-line evaluations of teaching, the university's plans for preparing for the visit next spring of the NWCCU accreditors, and the use of Y-accounts for the payment of professional dues.

Provost's Report: A question from a council member concerning the fate of the proposed phased retirement plan for tenured faculty turned out to be a nice segue to the provost's report. On this subject Provost Morris reported that the president had strong reservations about the plan, at least in its present form (it being too generous in his opinion and all too likely to be rejected by the Board of Regents). She cautioned faculty members not to consider the proposal a "done deal."

She too took up the matter of budget cuts, reminding council members that Phase I proposals were due in the president's office this Friday, March 11th and that decisions based on these proposals would be announced right after spring break. For the colleges Phase I is something of a pro forma deadline, one necessitated by the exigencies of creating a budget that can be sent to the Regents in June. The Phase II deadline of May 1st is the more critical one in that is when proposals for how the budget cuts will actually be made strategically. She emphasized the need to examine possible program consolidations and eliminations in light of their interrelationships with other programs. An outline of the Phase II process and a time table will be posted on the provost's website this coming Friday. Jane Baillargeon reminded provost and council that any plans to eliminate academic programs would also have to include plans for how the university would see to completion those students already enrolled in the affected programs. Bill McLaughlin added that his office would be putting on a series of workshops immediately after spring break to involve faculty in the decision-making process. Ideally each faculty member will be attending two four-hour workshops in this period. [Professor McLaughlin added the following information as clarification: The purpose of the four-hour workshops is for faculty members to develop program maps and to provide information for the program prioritization tool. 'Program maps' for academic programs are a graphic display of courses and activities offered inside academic programs as well as courses and activities outside the program but inside the university. These maps are accompanied by text and a series of matrices that will be completed for each program by the faculty who participate. Information on entry requirements, concepts and skills offered, intended learning outcomes, and key assessment oriented learning experiences will be generated for each program. Maps may also be made for research programs, administrative services provided by a college, university-wide student services, and outreach programs that foster student learning outcomes or produce some other output (e.g., new knowledge, transfer technology) or outcome.

A program is defined as a unit that exists to support students in achieving specific learning outcomes, or *any activity or collection of activities of the institution that consumes resources* (dollars, space, equipment, time, etc.) and produces outputs and outcomes. More specifically,

- A program should provide a unique service or package of services and should be able to stand alone in terms of identifiable outputs and outcomes.
- A program may not be defined as a college or a department.
- Graduate instructional programs must be defined separately from undergraduate instructional programs.

- Student service units are also seen as offering programs that support students in achieving specific learning outcomes.
- A program may contain a combination of research, service, or instructional activities, or a program may be defined only as a research, service, or instructional program.

Examples of programs that have general education funding include, but are not limited to, a single degree program (e.g., B.A./B.S., M.A./M.S., Ph.D., professional degree programs, certificate programs, etc.), an instructional program that mostly provides general education coursework (e.g., English composition program--English 90, 101 and 102, the core program), a program unit like the Women's Center, a research unit like The National Institute for Advanced Transportation Technology (NIATT), etc.]

The provost also reported that funding for the installation of technology in a thirtieth classroom in the remodeled UCC (Teaching and Learning Center) had been secured and that the provost's office and Glenn Wilde's office had pooled some funds so as to be able to offer a workshop this summer on 'teaching and technology,' with particular emphasis on getting courses on the web. On a related issue she reported that Mike Whiteman was heading up an effort to standardize fees for the university's on-line courses (currently that vary from \$0 to \$75 a credit). Standardization would allow a greater opportunity for marketing the on-line courses. It is also assumed that part of the standard fee would be dedicated to the needs of the Instructional Technology office.

Announcements and Communications: Kathe Gabel, the university's faculty representative to the NCAA reported on the newly restructured President's Athletic Advisory Committee. Its restructuring formation by the president is a result of a recommendation of the University Vision and Resource Task Force (UVRTF) that the faculty be given a greater oversight role in athletics. In future years Faculty Council would nominate two or three of its members to serve on this group and the president would appoint one of those nominees. In this formative year council member Robert Rinker had volunteered to take on that role, agreeably to the president, and so, with council's consent, would continue. There was no objection. In response to a question as to whether this group would be the one that would report on the athletic budget to Faculty Council the answer was, no. That report would come from the newly reconstituted Budget and Finance Committee. (This question and answer formed another great segue to council's next agenda item.)

Committee Reports: The council took up as a seconded motion from the Committee on Committees to completely revise the function of the Institutional Planning and Budget Committee and rename it the Budget and Finance Committee (FC-05-027). At the suggestion of the soon to be former vice-president for finance and administration, this committee would have greater involvement in the budget process and in university finance. This greater involvement is also congruent with the recommendations of the UVRTF. The provost, vice-president for finance, the budget director, and the director of institutional planning and assessment would be added as ex officio members to his body. (In response to a question, it was noted that the three student members would normally be one each from the undergraduate students, the [regular] graduate students and the law students, but that was left unspecified to allow for the possibility of a different distribution if there were not the requisite nominations from the ASUI, the GSA, and the SBA.) The motion carried unanimously.

General Orders:

FC-05-025: Councilor James Reid presented the rationale for proposal to change the university's grading system to one which allowed the awarding of pluses and minuses (but no A+ or D-). He reported that a narrow majority of our peers had plus/minus grading, including, significantly, Washington State University and our own Law School. So do Idaho State University and Lewis Clark State College (but not Boise State University). If this proposal were adopted we would be consistent with WSU in not having an A+ or a D-. A majority of the university faculty who were polled were in favor of a plus/minus system. It would be implemented in the 2007 academic year. It was moved and seconded (McLaughlin, Bechinski) to approve the proposal. After further discussion which centered around the perceived ease or difficulty in making the finer distinctions allowed under the proposal, the perceived positive or negative effects on individual and over-all university gpa's, and the faculty member's ability to not use the new system even if adopted, the vote to approve was 10 to 2 with one abstention.

FC-05-026: Chair Bailey explained the history and rationale for the vote on the proposal from the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics on 'Academic Integrity in Intercollegiate Athletics: Principles, Rules, and Best Practices.' It was moved and seconded (Beard, Zemetra) to approve the statement. In the discussion it was made very clear that nothing in this document was intended to be a response to anything that was happening in the University of Idaho's Athletic Department. Rather it was, in effect, a way of suggesting to the world at large (or at least those schools which compose the NCAA's Division I) a set of 'best practices' in regard to academic integrity in athletics, practices which were already in effect here. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: There being no new business offered up, it was moved and seconded (Beard, Baillargeon), in response to a directive look from the chair, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. Since next week is spring break, the next meeting will be Tuesday, March 22nd.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Q. Adams
Faculty Secretary and Secretary of Faculty Council