

University of Idaho
FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2004-2005 Meeting #21, Tuesday, April 19, 2005

Present: Adams (w/o vote) Anderson, Bailey, Cloud, Farnen, George (sitting in for Baillargeon), Greever, Gunter, McGuire, McMurtry, Morris (w/o vote), Reese, Reid, Rinker, Woolston, Zemetra

Absent: Baillargeon, Beard, Bechinski, Exon, Hammel, McLaughlin, Young

Observers: 15

Call to Order: A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair Bailey called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Minutes: The minutes of April 5th were approved as distributed with the correction that they should read on page 3, in the discussion of FC-05-038 that there were more than 70 students enrolled in the doctoral program at Idaho Falls.

Chair's Report: The chair brought to Faculty Council members' attention the accreditation review now being undergone by the Athletic Department. He noted that there was a website (<http://www.ncaa-cert.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=71355>) where one can review the draft self-study and add comments or observations. He urged council members to take advantage of that opportunity. He reminded council members that elections for the 2005-2006 council should be completed by April 30th and the names of the newly elected given to the faculty secretary. He reported that he had been approached by some students and some faculty concerning a personnel decision recently made and reported who wanted to know if Faculty Council would be reviewing the matter in any way. None of the members present expressed any interest in conducting a further review. He further reported that there were currently five companies vying to market the university who would be making presentations on campus in the next few days. In conclusion, he noted that the Board of Regents would be meeting in Idaho Falls Thursday and Friday of this week and that vice-chair Bob Zemetra would be representing him at that meeting.

Provost's Report: The provost announced that the numerical data which has been gathered in support of Phase II of the budget reduction process was in the process of being audited and cleaned up. The raw data was available to all via the provost's website. An analysis of that data had been performed, using the various metrics and weightings that were also posted at the website and that analysis has been made available to certain people in each college as potential input into the several colleges' decisions about their budget cuts and potential reallocations. In response to a question she said that the analysis was not yet generally available out of concern that the purely quantitative analysis, without the corresponding qualitative analysis, might lead to premature and incorrect conclusions about possible program closures. A member of council noted that Faculty Council was going to be asked to make recommendations on any notices of intent that would come out of the budget-cutting process and could only make informed recommendations if they had the full range of data, including the numerical analysis and the accompanying qualitative analysis, available to them. The provost thought that such access was a possibility but should be accompanied by some training as to how to interpret the numerical analysis. She noted that council's Budget and Finance Committee, which included both undergraduate and graduate student representation, would be taking a part in all the budget proposal presentations and its chair, Jeff Young, could bring that discussion to Faculty Council's deliberations. She also noted that there was a slight change of schedule in that the dean's would be making their recommendations to the president on Tuesday, April 26th, rather than on Monday, April 25th as previously scheduled, so that their recommendations would not be made public until after April 26th.

Communications and Announcements:

Introduction of David Chichester: The chair introduced the new interim vice-president for finance and administration, David Chichester.

Student Fee Proposals: Mark Brainard, the university's budget director, presented council with the student fee increases that will be proposed to the Board of Regents at this week's board meeting. The total increase being asked was for 9.3%. He expressed particular praise for the help that the administration had received from the ASUI leadership in putting this package of fee increases together. He also provided some history of past fee increases and information on the university's standing vis-à-vis other schools in the west. In the latter regard, Idaho's schools were at 12th place among the fifteen western states and the fees charged by its institutions of higher education were at 90.5% of the regional average. There were questions as to what extent all of these fees represented the common good and whether they might disproportionately favor the interests of undergraduate students as opposed to graduate students. In response it was noted that the increase in the associated student fee would be shared proportionally with ASUI, the GSA and the SBA. Brainard further noted that graduate and professional fees remained unchanged, as it had for the better part of a decade, in recognition of the low stipends the university was able to offer graduate students.

Report on Preparations for Interim Accreditation Visit, Spring 2006: The provost handed out to council copies of a "Framework for Addressing NWCCU Recommendations" put together by Archie George and Jane Baillargeon. With reference to recommendation 14, "Develop comprehensive assessment plan," the provost noted that the process the university had engaged in for Phase II although tedious has tremendously improved our ability to establish a solid assessment program. We certainly have far more data to work with than we have ever had before. The president will be issuing the first of his annual report cards on progress at the university on April 30th and that document will contain more detail on these topics. The provost was asked by the secretary about recommendation 11, "Find solutions to deferred maintenance," which, alone, had no comments under "current status." The provost replied that solutions to this very expensive problem will potentially arise from resources reallocated at the end of Phase II.

Update on Post-Retirement Benefits: Mark McGuire reported on the work of the task force dealing with the issue of post-retirement benefits. The task force is continuing to meet seeking to understand what the implications for the university are with respect to the new GASB accounting rules slated to go into effect in July 2007. It does not appear to the task force that the university will be able to avoid coming up with the millions of dollars the new standards require. It is a very significant figure, \$14 million per year over twenty years to fund the present value of future benefits of \$238 million, if our current benefits policy remains unchanged. This is a nation-wide problem for colleges and universities: it is said that the corresponding figure for the University of Michigan is \$1.1 billion. The task force has composed a set of guiding principles which will be publicly released sometime this week. The task force will be making its recommendations to the president in June with probable implementation in the next fiscal year (FY 2006); he did not know if the president contemplated a period of public review after the recommendations were made to him. In response to questions, he said that the task force was not yet trying to draft recommendations but that there was certainly a strong feeling that the benefits of current retirees should be retained in some form and that post-retirement benefits for employees with many years of service were also supported. Current employees without many years of service were much less likely to see post-retirement benefits. The task force was dedicated to doing the best they could and he urged councilors to look closely at the set of guiding principles once they were made public.

Update on Proposed Changes to FSH 1565 "Academic Ranks and Responsibilities." Professor Fran Wagner, chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, provided some background on the proposed changes to this section of the Handbook. The changes the committee was working on were an attempt to better align faculty responsibilities with position descriptions and evaluations. The Faculty Affairs Committee wanted

to bring the proposed changes forward this semester, but Faculty Council Chair decided it needed broad faculty input prior to coming to a vote of Faculty Council. Faculty Affairs Committee chair recognized the complexity of the task and decided it would not be advisable to seek a vote on these changes this spring but rather to seek council's advice on how to gather more input.

In the ensuing discussion, Professor Wagner was asked why the FAC had chosen to define teaching load so closely and not other faculty activities. Did that not reduce necessary flexibility too much and, indeed, was it attempting to fix a problem that really did not exist? Professor Wagner responded that the attention paid to defining teaching load was the result of its relative susceptibility to such definition and in part to the centrality of teaching in most faculty member's job descriptions: once teaching load was defined, the other parts of the faculty member's responsibilities tended to fall into place. The committee was also concerned with transparency and the kind of situation adduced from the College of Agriculture where a faculty member's teaching load might be out at 25%, because that was the amount of his or her salary derived from the instructional budget, even though he or she might actually teach two courses a semester or more. The provost offered the opinion that some of the material gathered in Phase II might provide useful data in this regard.

An observer noted that the proposed revisions seemed to give a higher value to interdisciplinary research and teaching than they did to specialized research and teaching. While he applauded the renewed emphasis on interdisciplinary work, he didn't think it should receive greater weight than specialized work. Both were equally necessary. A councilor asked if all the non-teaching, non-research categories (e.g., service, advising) mightn't be grouped together under a title like "citizenship" so as to give them a collective weight that befitted their importance.

By the end of the discussion Mickey Gunter and Barbara Greever had agreed to work with FAC in planning a process whereby broad faculty input could be gathered in the early fall to inform the ongoing revision process.

Committee Reports:

FC-05-039: FSH 3820 "Ombuds Office": Professor Charles Morrison and Ms. Roxanne Schreiber, university ombudspersonnel, presented a series of proposed revisions to the Handbook section detailing the operation of the office. It was moved and seconded (McGuire, Zemetra) to approve them. In the ensuing discussion Professor Morrison said that, aside from the change in name, prompted by continuing complaints that ombudsman was sexist, the changes in procedures presented in the proposals served to reflect changes in national standards. Some concern was expressed in the change from "half-time" to "part-time," a change that had been suggested by the provost, that the flexibility espoused by the change might, because of financial constraints, ultimately lead to a reduction in services which might be a "penny wise, pound foolish" decision if situations that might have been resolved by the ombuds office were to eventuate in lawsuits.

At the suggestion of Professor Morrison it was moved and seconded (McMurtry, Reid) to amend by adding as the last sentence in A-3 the following, "Contact with the office does not constitute nor is it regarded as notice to the university." In response to a question Professor Morrison explained the intensity with which the office made known to clients or potential clients the proper avenues for notification. The motion to amend carried (13-1). The main motion carried (13-0 with one abstention).

FC-05-040: FSH 1570: "Faculty Secretary": The changes in the document before council which would change the faculty secretary's appoint from "half-time" to "part-time" had, as above, been suggested by the provost and referred to the Faculty Affairs Committee for discussion and recommendation. Professor Wagner reported that FAC had considered the changes and, in effect, was recommending a "do not pass"

to Faculty Council. Since the proposal was not coming as a seconded motion from FAC. Chair Bailey noting that we needed a motion if we were to discuss the proposal, it was moved and seconded (Zemetra, Cloud) to approve them.

Proponents of the change argued that it would provide flexibility in arrangements that might result in the faculty secretaryship being more than half-time or less. Moreover, it was certainly the custom in negotiating a professional-level position that all parameters of that position are negotiable. Opponents were concerned that, in light of the provost's statement that there was insufficient money budgeted for the position, that the flexibility could be expected to lead to a reduction in appointment or the necessity of appointing a junior faculty member instead of a senior one. Several councilors spoke to the importance of providing faculty governance with appropriate support and one noted that in comparison to the large sum the university was prepared to pay out for an interim financial vice-president, the cost of a half-time faculty secretaryship seemed modest. There was a motion to table (Anderson) which died for lack of a second. When asked, the faculty secretary said the he found half-time to be a reasonable approximation of the time spent on the job but could not say yet concerning the summer as he has not yet had a summer in the faculty secretaryship under current conditions. The vote was 2 for to 11 opposed. The motion (2) failed.

FC-05-041: FSH 5400: "Employment Agreement for Patents and Copyrights": Before council were two versions of proposed changes to 5400, one (imaginatively labeled "A") was the version that had come to council some two months previous from FAC (having been reviewed by Danielle Hess, associate university counsel) and which had been tabled so that the secretary could find out from the Research Office their view of the proposals. That revision had been slow to return to council because Gene Merrell, assistant vice-president for research had sent it on to Sharyl Kammerzell, associate university counsel for comment. Version "B" was Dr. Kammerzell's proposed revision. The secretary reminded council that, unlike "A," version "B" had no standing on council until such time as it might be moved as a substitute for "A."

By this time, 5:00 having come and gone, it was not just the secretary who was a bit rummy and the discussion of the motion was somewhat unfocused, and the unfocus was abetted by the difficulty in remembering whether it was "A" or "B" which was the current object of discussion. Points raised were: (1) how to make section B, particularly of version "A" (see how difficult it all is?), internally consistent (even though the language of version B's section B is lifted verbatim from board policy); (2) whether in version B, the revisions of A-1 now make A-2 through A-4 redundant; and (3) what is the impact of either of the versions on graduate students, particularly with respect to unfunded thesis work?

It was moved and seconded (Rinker-McMurtry) to table the motion. The motion carried.

Adjournment: It was moved and seconded (Cloud, and too many seconds to mention) to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Q. Adams
Faculty Secretary and Secretary to the Faculty