

**Provost and Executive Vice President**

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Provost's Council Members,

The University of Idaho enters the new fiscal year with a sense of momentum as we welcome President Nellis. We are seeking innovative and creative ways to focus our efforts and become more efficient, effective, and entrepreneurial to address the needs of our state and the world. We undertake these actions in the context of the continuing global economic crisis that is impacting the fiscal resources of Idaho and the University and to focus on creating a vital and sustainable future for this institution.

Without making strategic changes, we will likely continue to face significant budget shortfalls. Our challenge is to close the funding gap by making revenue enhancements while at the same time looking for ways to reduce cost. We have many ways to build our revenue such as: strategic student recruitment and retention; a more robust summer school program; strategic online learning; expanded interdisciplinary funded research; contributions from alumni and corporations; and potential enhancement through technology transfer. We have started to invest in these areas, but much more can and must be done. President Nellis has also asked us to continue implementation of our Strategic Action Plan, begin to operationalize our innovation proposals, and continue setting priorities at all levels.

While we pursue revenue enhancements and implement our innovations proposals, we must look for cost efficiencies while preserving institutional quality. As an additional step forward in gaining efficiencies and being good stewards of our limited resources, we will streamline our curriculum offerings and administrative structure beginning in the fall of 2010. After our discussions at Provost's Council, I have decided to implement the following new policies:

- Undergraduate courses with less than 15 students and graduate classes with less than 8 students will be merged with other sections or cancelled. Exceptions will be made to comply with specific accreditation requirements related to accreditation requirements, co-taught courses with Washington State University, external funding, or specialized laboratory requirements. Each Dean will develop a report on these exceptions and have it approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President. We need to undertake this exercise in a very serious manner, so we anticipate these exceptions will be infrequent. While these changes will be in place in the fall of 2010, I ask that each of you begin the implementation of this policy during the current academic year where possible.
- Departments with less than nine tenure-track faculty members should be merged with other departments to realize economies of scale. These changes should be submitted through the normal NOI process by November 1, 2009.
- Department chair/head appointments will be based on 9-month contracts and an equitable stipend will be paid based on their work during the summer months.

- Y-accounts will be centralized in the Dean's office of each College. The Dean will then have the flexibility to strategically allocate those funds to meet the highest needs of the college and university.
- Open/vacant faculty and staff lines will revert to the Vice President for each division. These lines will be reallocated according to the unit hiring plans that are in concert with focal areas of the university and the goals of the Strategic Action Plan. Under the advice of the new Executive Director of Planning and Budget, and in discussion with executive leadership, a plan for all lines reverting to the central administration areas may be developed.
- The travel freeze remains in effect for 2009-10, but review and approval of necessary travel will revert to the College/Unit level; the same applies to state-funded or international travel. Each of you should target a 10% cost reduction from 2009-2010 expenditure levels for general education funded travel and continue to use judicious restraint with other funds so they are available for appropriate use in priority areas. Last year, travel costs decreased by 30% on general education funds and by 4.8% overall across all fund types. This indicates a greater understanding across the University about what may constitute necessary travel as we seek to live within our decreasing means.

Thanks for your dedicated commitment on the issues we've faced to date and for the work we'll accomplish as we chart our course for the future. I look forward to meeting with each of you to discuss your implementation plans before the semester starts. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Doug Baker, Provost and Executive Vice President

Cc: M. Duane Nellis, President