

University of Idaho
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
2009-10 Meeting #19
Tuesday February 9, 2010

Present: Baillargeon, Baker (w/o vote), Barlow, Battaglia, Edwards, Eveleth, Fritz, Geist, Graden, Guilfoyle, Hill (w/o vote), Holbrook, Horn, Huber, Joyce, Mihelich, Miller (chair), Murphy, Padagham-Albrecht, Stark, Williams, Wilson. Campus-Centers Senators: Dakins (Idaho Falls), Newcombe (Coeur d'Alene). **Absent:** Baird, Limbaugh, Marshall. Campus-Centers Senators: Budwig (Boise). 6 guests.

A quorum being present, the Chair opened the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes: It was moved (Miller/Eveleth) to accept the minutes of meeting #18 of the Faculty Senate. Approved.

Chair's Report: The Chair reminded senate that he would be traveling to Boise next week to attend the SBOE second reading of the proposed policy change – furloughs and salary reduction language. He noted that despite input from all of the Idaho university senates, recommending changes, the language as presented was identical to that presented at the first reading. He also pointed out that for the second reading the senate Chairs had not been provided a specific allocation on the agenda and could only present during the open forum part of the meeting. He went on to summarize the recommendations supported by the UI senate: a requirement that furloughs undergo a uniform process during implementation including appropriate consultation with faculty (senate). He indicated that the SBOE-proposed language with respect to salary reductions has no constraints and that is a serious flaw in the present draft. One response from the SBOE was to refer to their lawyer about whether the proposed language on salary cuts violated tenure. There was no clear opinion from the lawyer and the Boise State contingent asked that it be referred to the Idaho Attorney General for his opinion.

Provost's Report: The Provost noted that President Nellis had been in Boise meeting with legislatures and others for most of the previous week. The Provost was cautiously optimistic that in the face of severe cuts to the state appropriations, constituting a 15% reduction over the past 18 months that the university had weathered this battering with few layoffs and at least to date, no furloughs. The program reductions approved by senate in FY09 had contributed to advanced planning that had buffered the recent severe cuts. He emphasized that we needed to focus upon increasing revenues through increasing enrollments and increases in research revenues. He commented that recent restructures such as that in the College of Natural Resources also contributed to improving our fiscal situation. Addressing student retention, he reviewed the recent “first college generation” conference.

A senator noted that the conference had provided a good opportunity for discussion of retention issues. Faculty and staff from WSU also attended and there had been useful ideas exchanged. There had also been active discussion about the importance of mentorship – provided both by faculty and fellow students.

The Provost noted other important contributors to improving retention included regular and early feedback to freshmen on their academic performance, building good relationships between advisers and freshmen, and turning in mid-term grades on time. He added that it was morally appropriate for us to provide strong support for students and retention was a bonus of this important aspect of the UI culture. He then addressed recruitment. Vandal Friday is a very important event. Ninety percent of students who attend Vandal Friday enroll. This year there would be systematic follow up, on three Fridays in April to catch students who were unable to attend Vandal Friday.

Regulation M: A revision to M1 was moved (Geist/Padaghm-Albrecht)-proposed: **“Attendance.** Instructors will make clear at the beginning of each course the extent to which grades depend on attendance and in-class participation. Students are responsible for attending class. Students are accountable for communicating with the instructor and making up missed work in the event of any absence. Instructors should provide reasonable opportunity for students to make up work when the student’s absence results from: (a) participation in official university activities and programs, (b) personal illness, (c) family illness and care, or d) other compelling circumstances.”

A student senator noted that the language had softened from the original that “Instructors were *obligated* to provide an opportunity.....” to “Instructors *should* provide reasonable opportunity”. It was felt that this allowed too much latitude for instructors and this suggested change was not supported by the students.

There was extensive discussion about the limitations to the number of days of absence that would be reasonable. It was noted that FSH 4700 E2 contained language describing excessive absences. For classes that require team or ensemble work it is not possible to make up missed classes because these examples required team participation. It was further noted that the original intention of the policy change had been to include M1 part (c) allowance for absence to attend to “family illness and care”. A friendly amendment to change the wording from “Instructors should provide” to “Instructors shall provide” was accepted. There being no further discussion the question was called (including the friendly amendment), 18 in favor, 4 against. Approved.

The discussion then moved to the remainder of regulation M, sections 2-5. M2 contained elements that should not be lost. A part of the deleted M2 had been inserted into the revised M1. In the proposed revision from UCC, M2 was proposed for complete deletion. It was moved (Murphy / Holbrook) to reinstate M2. The Chair noted that word-smithing this document was not a task for the senate. It was moved (Guilfoyle / Mihelich) to table proposed changes to M2-M5. The sentiment of some was that M2-M5 should go back to UCC for further revision, moved (Miller/Holbrook), 13 in favor, 6 against. Approved.

FS-10-028 - Discontinue BS Special Ed: The Chair asked UCC Chair, Senator Battaglia if there was any controversy with this item. Senator Battaglia responded that it had received strong support at UCC. The Chair asked if there was any further discussion; there being none, the question was called. Approved.

Structure of Furloughs – faculty and community feedback: CALS senators had received 44 responses. Of these, 34 indicated that they were supportive of some level of loss of service / cancellation of classes to be linked to possibly proposed furloughs. Seven faculty were not in favor of class cancellation.

Responses from Science – consensus view was that a compromise in support of at least one day of class cancellation should be linked to the proposed furlough structure.

Responses from CLASS indicated that a compromise on class cancellation was also favored and it was important to send a message that some visible impact of faculty being furloughed needed to be projected.

A small response from the College of Engineering also supported cancellation of some services linked to the proposed furlough structure. The College of Law also called for a significant component of class cancellation to be linked to the proposed furlough structure.

It was noted that closure of the university for a day would impact staff who would be forced to take a full day pay cut in a pay period in which a closure day occurred, and this was undesirable. A counter-argument was that closure of the university for a day was the most effective tactic in sending a message of the impact of furloughs, as a piece-meal approach arising from individual faculty cancelling single classes over different times would not be noticed by the SBOE, the legislature or the Idaho public. Faculty had greater flexibility than staff with respect to taking furloughs at set times and they could be more easily spread across multiple pay periods decreasing their noticeable impact on individual pay-checks.

There was further discussion of increasing or removing the \$130K salary cap (equivalent to 6 days furlough) in the putative scheme. In addition, there was discussion about increasing the lower end salary limit to further protect lower salaried employees.

The break out of position descriptions and percent teaching versus other appointment responsibilities in the context of proportional cuts to days teaching was also discussed. For those who were against cancellation of classes, the concern was that on balance the message that might be delivered to the legislature did not compensate for the loss to the teaching programs constituted by cutting of classes.

It was also noted that the student body and student leadership should be afforded their perspectives on the linkage of class cancellation to furloughs.

It was further suggested that a campus-wide information forum be initiated to educate the entire UI community about why furloughs may be implemented. Also, the notion of establishing the cost of the loss of services resulting from proposed furloughs was discussed. The sentiment was that it was important to actively educate the broader Idaho community that there are tangible effects of this action.

Another point of discussion was the possibility of implementing a shared and / or donated leave arrangement to aid in protecting staff from the effects of furloughs.

The Provost responded that unfortunately, we do not presently have a mechanism in policy that would allow us to pursue this suggestion.

On a positive note: Many in the UI community recognized that these were difficult times and that as a last resort it was preferable to take furloughs to help the university and also prevent the alternative, potential loss of jobs of some of our colleagues.

It was moved (Miller/Holbrook) that senate recommends the proposed salary cap in the proposed tiered furlough scheme be lifted or eliminated. Approved.

It was moved (Miller/Holbrook) that senate recommends the university cancel classes on a university-wide basis on at least one day, linked to the proposed tiered furlough scheme. Approved with one abstention requested for note (Murphy).

Adjournment: It was moved (Murphy/Fritz) to adjourn at 5:00 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodney A. Hill, Faculty Secretary and
Secretary to Faculty Senate.