

University of Idaho General Faculty Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2004

Call to Order. Provost Pitcher called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. in room 104 of the Janssen Engineering Building. Substantially more than the required 117 faculty members were present to constitute a quorum.

In Memoriam. Provost Pitcher asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of the passing of Ross Christian, Emeritus Professor of Animal and Veterinary Science.

Minutes. It was moved and seconded (Gunter, Lillard) to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2004 Special Meeting of the Faculty. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcements. Provost Pitcher announced that a letter from Interim President Michael would be distributed by the end of the meeting, in which the President was calling for a 6% holdback across all RCM units. The letter also indicated that salary agreements would include language allowing for the possibility of furloughs if such an action was deemed necessary.

The Provost asked the faculty to consider removing Agenda item I. D. FSH Section 3710 (Leave Policies for All Employees) from the agenda. (The proposed changes to Section 3710 had not been reviewed by Faculty Council.) Faculty Council Chair Fran Wagner moved to postpone action on this item, pending future action by the Council. The motion was seconded by Bob Zemetra. Concerns expressed about the proposed changes included:

- Public perception if furloughs were instituted—work would still get done, though theoretically it would appear that faculty were working less for less pay
- Vagueness of the proposed language for triggering the use of furloughs
- Consequences of a faculty member refusing to sign a salary agreement that included the possibility of furloughs
- Potential unfair or inequitable use of furloughs
- Institutionalizing furloughs as a means for addressing financial problems
- Possible changes to health benefits if furloughs were implemented
- Placing the financial burden on faculty and staff, who were not the cause of the budget deficits

The Provost accepted responsibility on the part of the administration for problems generated by the University Place project. He said that the current budgetary crisis was due to a combination of factors and that the administration would prefer not to use the furlough option to achieve a balanced budget. However, without furloughs there could be layoffs and/or non-renewal of one-year contracts. The Provost added that if the temporary one percent increase in the sales tax is sun-setted, then the UI may be facing even more serious problems in FY06. He said that after considering lag-pay, furloughs, and other options, the administration believed that an across-the-board 6% holdback for all RCM units was the best way to address the deficits and avoid increasing the current debt. Peter Griffiths stated that it was very difficult under the current system to run a department and suggested that the UI should do away with revenue attribution. The Provost said that the Deans were reviewing these policies. Jerry Wegman questioned the legality of imposing furloughs. He also noted that in the past, the UI community had worked together to resolve problems, but that this collegiality now appears to be eroding. The implementation of furloughs would lead to further erosion of that cooperative attitude. Faculty Chair Fran Wagner said that he had received numerous comments and e-mails regarding the financial crisis, often characterized by mistrust towards the administration. In his view, however, fault should be shared by the SBOE which had approved the Boise initiatives and did not support the UI request for a 10% student fee increase. Paul Oman observed that there were major discrepancies in teaching loads and said he had little confidence in the RCM model. The previous question was moved and the motion to remove Section 3710 from the agenda was defeated.

I. A. FSH Section 1550. Policies and Procedures. Sharyl Kammerzell, Associate University Counsel, introduced the proposal that had been developed by an ad hoc committee, chaired by Kammerzell, and approved by the Faculty Council. She said that the proposal would serve to provide uniformity to the process of creating and approving new UI policies. Jeff Harkins rose to address this issue, but first asked for a moment of silence in memory of former UI President Hartung. Harkins noted that the proposed policy, as written, would be in conflict with FSH Section 1520 and Article IV, Section 11 of the UI Constitution since it appeared to bypass faculty approval for new policies.

Kammerzell responded that there was no intent to bypass the faculty and that the policy language could be changed to meet this concern. Harkins suggested that the wording needed to be reworked and he moved to table the motion to approve Section 1550. Provost Pitcher indicated that there was no great hurry to enact the proposal, and it could undergo further consideration by the Faculty Council. The motion to table was seconded by Kerry McKeever and was approved.

I. D. FSH Section 3710. Leave Policy for All Employees. The meeting returned to the discussion of changes to FSH Section 3710. In light of the earlier extended discussion of this topic and following a few additional comments, the faculty then voted unanimously in opposition to the proposed changes.

I. B. FSH Section 1590. Academic Unit By-Laws. David Lee-Painter, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, said that the purpose of this section was to systematize the process of establishing by-laws to ensure uniformity across campus, especially as the by-laws related to tenure and promotion policies. Departmental and college by-laws would be reviewed by the Dean and the Provost. This seconded motion from the Faculty Council was approved unanimously.

I. C. Section 3520. Faculty Tenure. FSH Section 3520 had been modified to reflect recent SBOE tenure policy changes. Peter Griffiths noted that under the proposed changes, it would be difficult to award early tenure to outstanding faculty. Associate UI Counsel Kammerzell was asked to read the revised SBOE policy. Because this version did not coincide precisely with the changes proposed in Section 3520, it was moved and seconded to table the proposed changes to Section 3520. The motion to table was approved.

II. A. Regulation B-7. Registration of Lower-division Students in Upper-division Courses. Approved unanimously.

II. B. College of Graduate Studies. Probation, Disqualification, and Reinstatement. Approved unanimously.

II. C. Graduate Council. Graduate Admission Requirements. Approved unanimously.

II. D. Start Date of Spring Semester. Mark Nielsen objected to the proposed change (to begin the spring semester on Monday rather than Wednesday) primarily on the grounds that the spring semester would have more days than the fall semester. Nielsen said that this could create problems for courses offered both semesters. Dean Don Burnett spoke in favor of the change noting that the loss of two days by starting on Wednesday created problems in the College of Law. Jeff Harkins pointed out that there had been an agreement with WSU to alternate the spring graduation dates, but that the agreement had never been observed by that institution. He suggested that if the start day was moved to Monday, then perhaps the Friday of that week could be a non-class day. Mark McGuire favored the change since this would mean that cross-listed courses with WSU would start at the same time. When the vote was taken, there were 33 in favor of the motion and 64 opposed. After the vote, Kenton Bird suggested that conversations with WSU be initiated to discuss the two institutions' spring schedules.

III. A. FC-04-017. College of Natural Resources/Forest Products: Elimination of the Pulp and Paper Technology Option. Approved unanimously.

IV. A. Disabilities Affairs Committee. Changes in the structure of this committee were approved unanimously.

IV. B. Facilities Scheduling Committee. Kathy Browder spoke against the recommended changes to the structure of the committee because, in her view, there was insufficient faculty representation on it. She moved to table action on the proposal. The motion was seconded by Ed Schmeckpepper and approved by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Bill Voxman
Interim Faculty Secretary